

Video Watchdog®

the Perfectionist's
Guide to
Fantastic Video

No. 13 \$4.50

Sep / Oct 1992



Special **SERIAL KILLERS** Issue!

MANHUNTER

The Slaying of
RED DRAGON

RAMPAGE

Friedkin's Thriller
RECUT!

RARITIES • RETITLINGS • RESTORATIONS





Video the Perfectionist's Watchdog® Guide to Fantastic Video

No. 13
Sep / Oct 1992

*"In art, as in science, there is no
delight without the detail."*

—Vladimir Nabokov,
Commentary to *EUGENE ONEGIN*

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KENNEL

LUCAS BALBO is currently preparing (with Peter Blumenstock) an English-language book about Spanish cult director Jess Franco, to be published next year by Videodrom in Berlin. His Nostalgia Archive (78 Rue de la Folie Régnault, 75011 Paris, France) licenses rare stills to books and magazines.

JOHN CHARLES is a freelance writer based in the Canadian province of Guelph, Ontario. He is currently preparing a major "Cutting Room Floor" piece—and much else besides—for VIDEO WATCHDOG.

G. MICHAEL DOBBS is assuming the editorship of the animation quarterly ANIMATO!, which ought to postpone his authorized biography of Max Fleischer another few years, easy. He tells us that VIDEO WATCHDOG was mentioned during BEING FROM ANOTHER PLANET on MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000.

MARK KERMODE is a regular contributor to such British and American publications as SIGHT & SOUND, FANGORIA, and THE DARKSIDE. His acclaimed coverage of William Friedkin's THE EXORCIST appeared in VIDEO WATCHDOG #6.

TIM LUCAS is the author of THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK, now available from Video Watchdog. He contributed an annotated list of his Top 15 horror films and novels to Harto Hänninen and Marko Latvanen's book VERIKEKKERIT—KAUHUN KÄSIKIRJA ("Blood Banquet—Horror Handbook"), which will be published in Finland in October.

PAUL M. SAMMON has written about films for OMNI, AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER, CINEFEX, CINEFANTASTIQUE, and many other magazines. His most recent book is SPLATTER PUNKS: EXTREME HORROR (St. Martin's Press), and he contributed an essay about the films of David Lynch to CUT! HORROR WRITERS ON HORROR FILM (Berkeley Books).

ERIK SULEV has written an in-depth review of John Woo's HARDBOILED for ASIAN TRASH CINEMA #3, and is now working with Mike Ferguson on a filmography of Barbara Bouchet ("the best Euro actress that ever was") for EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA #7.

STANLEY WIATER is a former contributing editor of FANGORIA and FEAR. Inventor of the 50¢ term "cinteratology" (ie., the study of cinematic terror), his latest book is DARK VISIONS: CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MASTERS OF THE HORROR FILM (Avon).

VW THANKS:

Bender Goldman and Helper (Leslie Rowe), Gail Block, Peter Blumenstock, Cinevista (Anna Brown), David Del Valle, Chris Dietrich, Fox Lorber Home Video (Dana Kornbluth), FoxVideo (Lewis Lagrone), William Friedkin, David F. Friedman, 1/2" Heaven (Layne Drebin-Murphy), Harto Hänninen, Graf Haufen, Eric Hoffman, Image Entertainment (Mike Betker), Bill Kelley, Charles Kilgore, Craig Ledbetter, Christopher Lee, Michael Lennick, David Lyman (The Cincinnati Post), MCA Universal Home Video (Maria La Magra), Michael Mann, Milestone Film & Video (Dennis Doros, Amy Heller), Miramax Films, the folks at MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000, Kim Newman, Bart Oosterhoorn, Stefano Piselli, Republic Pictures Home Video, Simone Romano, Gavin Smith, Something Weird Video (Mike Vraney), Alan Upchurch, USA Today (Elizabeth Snead), The Voyager Company (Paul Norman), Warner Home Video (Debbie Russes), Water Bearer Films... plus our contributors, distributors, subscribers, correspondents, and everyone who pre-ordered THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK!

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THE WATCHDOG BARKS



I DISLIKE having to describe VW #13 as a special "Serial Killer" issue, because the term has come to represent not only the least imaginative aspect of today's horror films, but it also seems to glorify the worst and most frightening element of the real world. However, Michael Mann's **MANHUNTER** (1986) and William Friedkin's **RAMPAGE** (1987) are decidedly worthy of our attention. **MANHUNTER** is a film with the rare conscience to provide its audience with clues as to how violent or perverse tendencies can be redirected, away from crime, toward more positive and socially beneficial expressions. And **RAMPAGE** is one of the most mentally stimulating crime stories ever filmed. *Mental stimulation*, that's the difference—we've seen enough numbing descents down the tubes of humanity.

Both films were produced by the ill-fated DeLaurentiis Entertainment Group and were greatly affected by that sponsorship. In the case of **MANHUNTER**—a prequel to **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**, based on Thomas Harris' 1981 best-seller **RED DRAGON**—Michael Mann was contractually obliged to deliver a two-hour cut. He subsequently prepared a slightly longer "director's cut" for cable television, but even this version is a far cry from **RED DRAGON**, the film he originally envisaged. In this issue, you can read about the two versions you can see and, in an exclusive exposé, Paul M. Sammon describes the version you *won't ever* see—which may have been the best of all.

Friedkin's **RAMPAGE**, on the other hand, was an outright casualty of DEG's 1988 bankruptcy and collapse; it was never distributed to American theaters. It was, however, released outside the United States, and the Japanese import laserdisc has been particularly valuable in cementing its reputation as Friedkin's finest film since **THE EXORCIST** (1973). Now, five years after it completed production, **RAMPAGE** is finally set to make its US theatrical debut (in August) under the aegis of Miramax Films. Watchdogs familiar with the export version will be surprised to learn that Friedkin has extensively *re-edited* **RAMPAGE** for its overdue native unveiling, reworking the film to tweak its original ambiguities into a more explicit reflection of his current feelings about the role

of Capital Punishment in our society. British journalist Mark Kermode—who wrote our definitive **EXORCIST** coverage in VW #6—returns to VIDEO WATCHDOG with a timely comparison of the domestic and export versions of this important and chilling film.

• • •

By the time you read this, THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK will be officially in print and available for immediate delivery. Historically, this is the first time that a horror-oriented magazine has launched its own book publishing division, and we're hoping that you'll help us to make this dramatic step a successful one.

THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK is a compendium of my "Video Watchdog" columns for VIDEO TIMES and GOREZONE, including some additional video-related articles which originally appeared in FANGORIA and FILM COMMENT—including my videographies of Dario Argento, Terence Fisher, Jess Franco, and the Edgar Wallace thrillers from West Germany. Also included are such nifty, never-before-published items as a background history of VIDEO WATCHDOG, a complete index to the first 12 issues of VIDEO WATCHDOG Magazine (which I've already found to be invaluable in itself), and a comprehensive listing of more than 650 video retitlings! A perfect-bound trade paperback, THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK contains 416 pages and hundreds of illustrations, including rare stills and departmental drawings by cartoonist Brian Thomas. The cover features a delightful full-color painting by Stephen R. Bissette, and the Foreword was contributed by the one, the only Joe Dante.

If you've been thinking of THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK as a collection of reprints, think again. All of my original "Video Watchdog" columns have been meticulously corrected, revised, and updated for their definitive presentation in THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK. In short, if you don't have the book, you don't have the whole truth—not to mention a lot of other neat stuff, besides. See this issue's inside back cover for the few remaining details!

To answer a question which has accompanied several advance orders—*Absolutely!* If THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK does well, our next book will be my long-promised THE HAUNTED WORLDS OF MARIO BAVA.

• • • • • Tim Lucas

ACHY STAKY HEART

Spanish DRACULA Debuts on Video

GEORGE Melford's rarely-seen Spanish **DRACULA**—photographed simultaneously with the 1931 Tod Browning/Bela Lugosi classic—will finally be released by MCA Universal Home Video on September 10. The *fully restored* film will be available in VHS only at \$14.98 as part of the label's "Classic Monsters Collection." The Paul Kohner production stars Carlos Villarias as Count Dracula, Lupita Tovar as Eva (the "Mina" role), Eduardo Arozemena as Dr. Van Helsing, Pablo Alvarez Rubio as Renfield, and Barry Norton as "Juan Harker." MCA's cassettes *will* be subtitled in English. No laserdisc release has yet been announced.

Despite the regal intensity of Lugosi's definitive performance, the Browning version is widely regarded today as a botched opportunity, an opinion which the availability of Melford's version should certify beyond the shadow of a doubt. Legend has it that Browning was in an impatient mood throughout the production, disregarding many of the suggestions in Garrett Fort's screenplay, as well as most of cinematographer Karl Freund's choreographed camera plans, in favor of a more static and expedient approach. The Spanish version is truer to the original script and, though



*"¡Oye—los niños de la noche!"
Carlos Villarias in the Spanish DRACULA.*

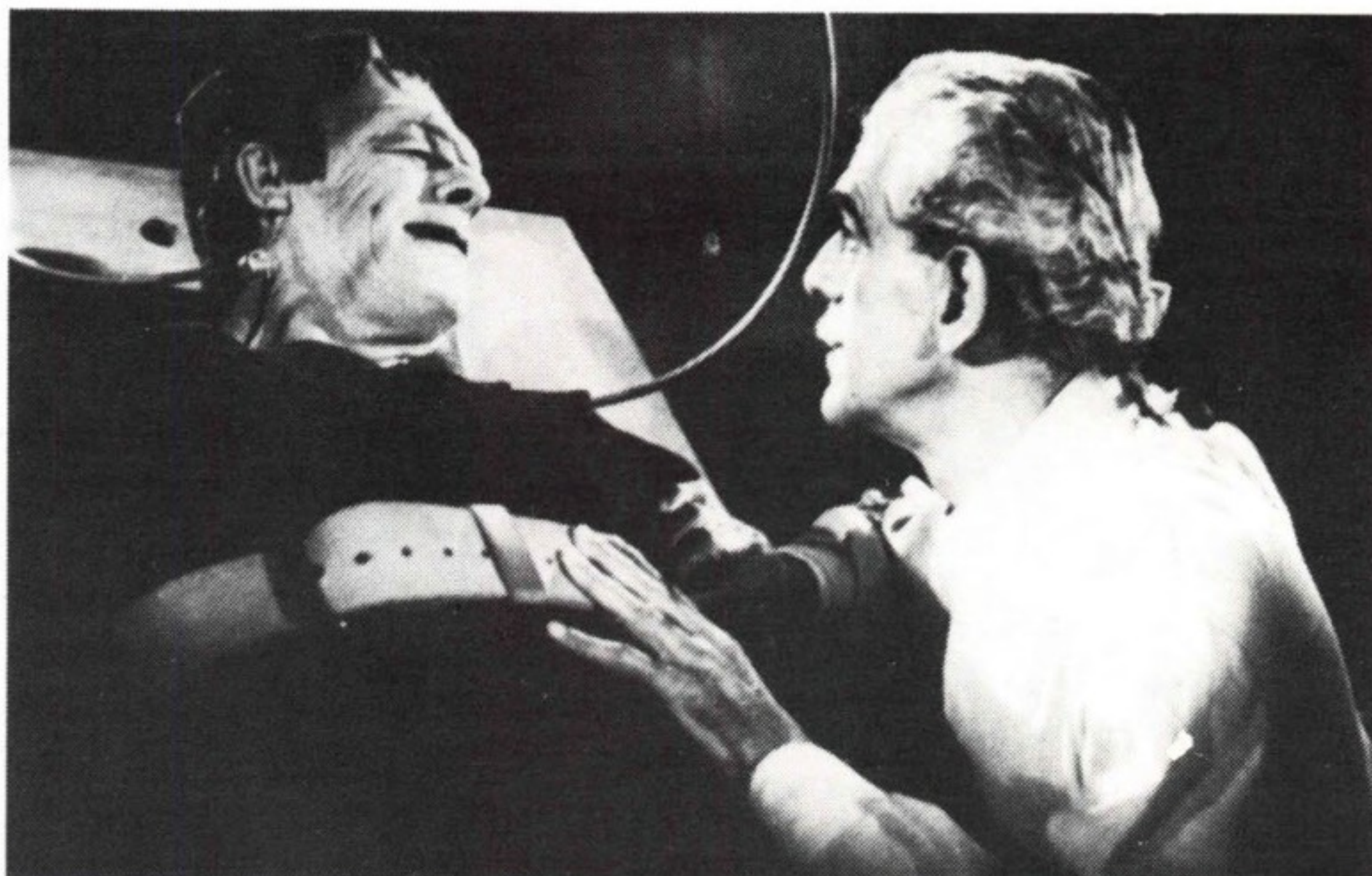
Freund is not credited, many of his ideas were adopted by cinematographer George Robinson (who later shot the sequel **DRAC-**

ULA'S DAUGHTER), with far more impressive results. As hoped, MCA Universal's cassette *will* incorporate the film's long-missing third

reel, which includes the attack on Renfield by Dracula's brides, and the extended voyage of the Vesta to England. At 104m, Melford's **DRACULA** is almost 1/3 longer than Browning's—imagine the possibilities!

When it rains, it pours. Also being released *for the first time* in MCA's \$14.98 "Classic Monsters Collection" are several of Universal's most significant horror classics: Robert Florey's **MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE** (1931), starring Bela Lugosi as the demonic Dr. Mirakle; Stuart Walker's **WERE-WOLF OF LONDON** (1935), starring Henry Hull as the screen's second lycanthrope (the first being Warner Oland in the same picture!); Lambert Hillyer's **DRACULA'S DAUGHTER** (1936) with Gloria Holden as the screen's first lesbian vampire; Rowland V. Lee's historical melodrama **THE TOWER OF LONDON** (1939) starring Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone, and Vincent Price; Joe May's **THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS** (1940), with Price and Sir Cedric Hardwicke; Christy Cabanne's **THE MUMMY'S HAND** (1940), the first and best of the "Kharis" series; and lastly, Erle C. Kenton's **THE HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** (1944), the first Universal "monster rally," starring Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney, John Carradine, and J. Carroll Naish.

Hitting the marketplace on August 27—and also priced at \$14.98—are Lewis Allen's **THE UNINVITED** (1944) with Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey, commonly cited as one of the screen's great ghost stories; Joseph Pevney's **MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES** (1957), the largely fictional biography of Lon Chaney Sr., featuring a *tour de force* portrayal by James Cagney; and **BRIDES OF DRACULA** (1960), Terence Fisher's luxurious Technicolor sequel to **HORROR OF DRACULA**, starring Peter Cushing (as Van Helsing)



The created becomes the creator as Boris Karloff revives the Frankenstein Monster (Glenn Strange) in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

and David Peel.

As with the Spanish **DRACULA**, no laserdisc releases of these titles have yet been announced.

Renovating Your Castle and Tomb

On July 10, Turner Network Television (TNT) showed a restored print of William Castle's **MR. SARDONICUS** (1961), which reinstated the long-unseen footage of Castle's prologue (in which he shares his definition of the word "ghoul") and his climactic interruption of the narrative (to count the audience's vote in the "Punishment Poll"). This quiet restoration of **MR. SARDONICUS** is especially meaningful since, of all Castle's "gimmick" films, it is the only one whose gimmick is virtually self-contained. (As long as you have a thumb of your own, the prop "Thumbs Up—Thumbs Down" card really isn't necessary, as much as we'd love to have one.) TNT's print also proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that only one ending (the "Thumbs Down" version) was filmed.

Bill Kelley tells us that the original British version of Seth Holt's

BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1971) recently aired on Miami-Ft. Lauderdale's public television station WPBT, Channel 2. The 92m 25s print included lingering shots of numerous graphic throat gougings—not to mention a brief instance of silhouetted nudity by Valerie Leon—that were not included in the PG-rated American International release prints. The film is part of a Viacom syndication package which also includes a 130m print of Sam Peckinpah's underrated **CROSS OF IRON** (1977), which was reduced to a choppy 119m for its R-rated domestic release!

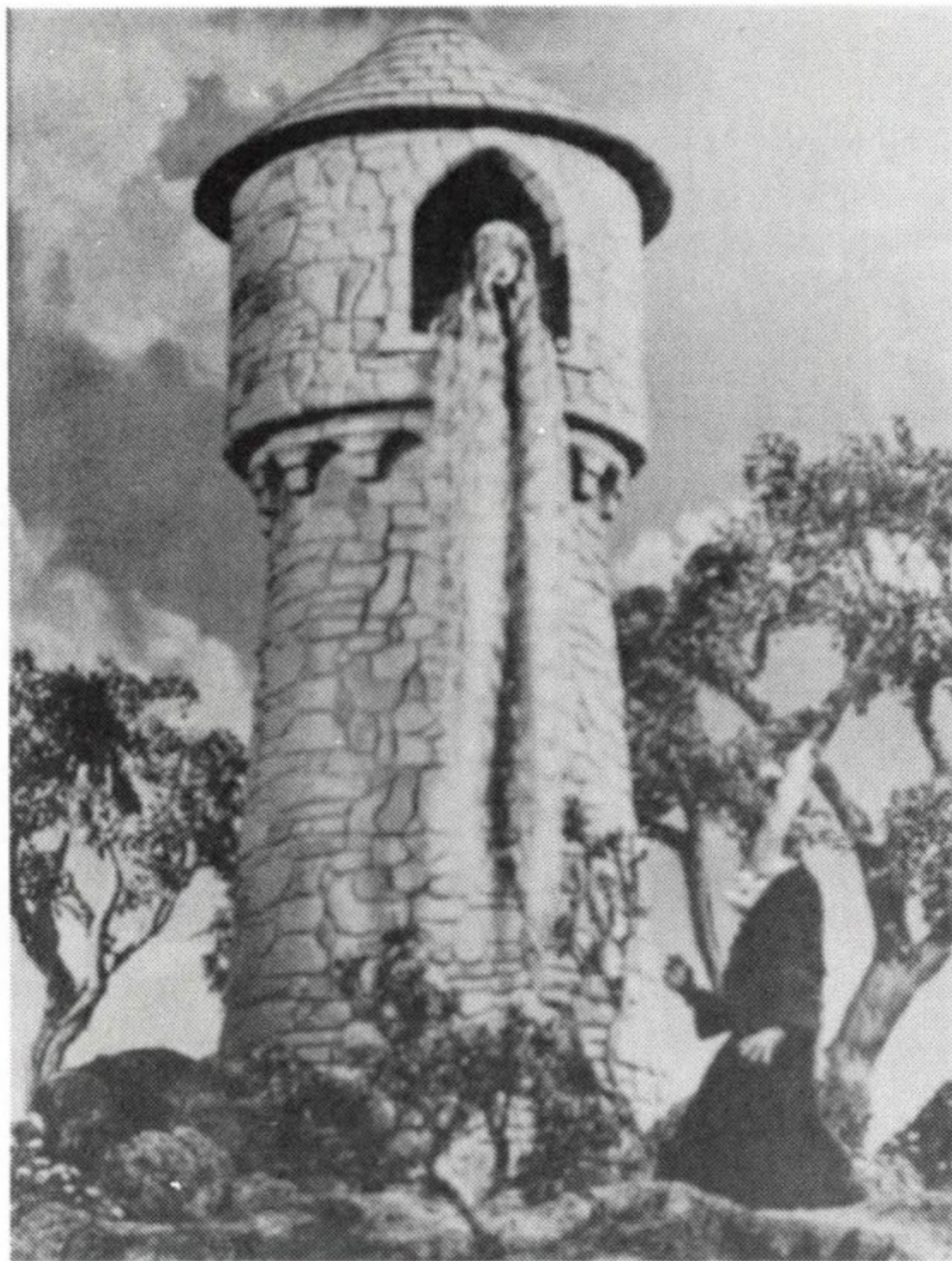
Fey Ray Tales

1/2" Heaven is making many an animation fan's dream come true with **THE RAY HARRYHAUSEN COMPILATION**. This 60m VHS tape collects all five of Harryhausen's rare Fairy Tale shorts: **HANSEL AND GRETEL**, **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**, **MOTHER GOOSE STORIES**, **THE STORY OF RAPUNZEL**, and **THE STORY OF KING MIDAS**. These little films, averaging 10m each, were filmed between 1946 and 1952. Purists

may regret 1/2" Heaven's decision to not present the shorts in their original chronological order (that would be GOOSE, RED, HANSEL, RAPUNZEL and MIDAS), but the Watchdog must admit that it makes better dramatic sense to surround **MOTHER GOOSE STORIES**—an initially charming but tiresome series of nursery rhyme black-outs—with the series' later, more sustained accomplishments. All of the shorts are charmingly designed, but Harryhausen's presence behind the camera is most clearly felt during the appearances of the ferocious Wolf of **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**, and the ugly Witch shared by both **HANSEL AND GRETEL** (in green-face) and **RAPUNZEL** (in white-face); these seminal expressions of villainy exhibit the same demonic auras and uncanny movements that Harryhausen would bring to fullest bloom with the Ymir of **20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH** (1958) and the Medusa of **CLASH OF THE TITANS** (1981). Most of the shorts were scripted by Charlott Knight, who later wrote the original story for **20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH**.

THE RAY HARRYHAUSEN COMPILATION is the only complete collection of its kind, and the image quality of all five shorts—taken from 16mm prints—is markedly superior to that of earlier, incomplete releases on several public domain kid-vid compilations. Until Harryhausen himself gets around to authorizing an official release of these films (supplemented, one hopes, with never-before-seen footage from the abandoned **TORTOISE AND THE HARE**), this tape is an absolute must for every serious animation fan.

Available for \$19.95 from 1/2" Heaven, 4590 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles CA, 90029, or call 1 (800) 788-7858, toll-free. Ask for their catalogs.



Ray Harryhausen's fearsome witch is featured in both THE STORY OF RAPUNZEL...

C'mon! Get Happy!

Now in syndication from New World Television, believe it or not, is a broadcast version of Ken Russell's controversial (and unrated) American feature, **CRIMES OF PASSION** (1986). Faced with its TV GUIDE listing, anyone remotely familiar with the film must immediately ask themselves how their local station will ever manage to pad-out the film's few remaining minutes to fill its two-hour timeslot, once the censors have had their way with it. In other words, Irresistible Viewing.

Screenwriter Barry Sandler's brilliantly witty dialogue suffers most frequently from the transition. In rewriting Kathleen Turner's line "You're not getting into my panties; there's one asshole in there already," the powers-that-be took advantage of the fact that Turner's drafting table was in the shot: "You're not getting into my *studio*; there's one *artist* in there already." (Interesting, how the revision suggests a synonymy between art-

ists and assholes, isn't it?)

During Laughlin's bedtime argument with frigid wife Annie Potts, one of his key dramatic lines is particularly botched. Instead of "What do you think I am, some kind of machine, that I just need a hole to come in?", we hear "What do you think I am, some kind of machine, that I just need... *a place to love?*" Potts' face scrunches-up like she's heard something indescribably revolting, while the viewer's face simply plummets somewhere south of perplexity.

The opening titles, which originally played over a dirty joke told offscreen by Bruce Davison, now feature only Rick Wakeman's synthesizer theme music. The music is mixed more upfront on this version than in the theatrical and videocassette versions, and the soundtrack has also been manipulated to eliminate the deadly hum of "Superman"—Anthony Perkins' killer vibrator—so the ignorant home viewer can mistake it for a simple dagger.



... and HANSEL AND GRETEL.

The TV prints contain only one slight instance of additional footage, one or two brief outtakes of Perkins' spying on Turner and Laughlin's lovemaking from an adjoining peephole room.

Whoever supervised this brazen rewrite saved their most ingenious stroke for the One Scene that the Watchdog was convinced couldn't possibly make it to commercial television. I speak, of course, of John Laughlin's outrageous performance art piece, "The Human Penis." In the original cut, Laughlin embarrasses his wife by reviving this old high school routine, in which he appears in only his boxer shorts and a shower cap, with a pair of basketballs strapped to his ankles. As Strauss' "Also Sprach Zarathustra" is blasphemously invoked on the soundtrack, Laughlin rises slowly from a small, squatting stance until he stands fully erect, trembling until he spews a heavy mouthful of climactic cream into the wind. Against all odds, the entire scene (with the

exception of the basketballs, which were cropped offscreen) was left intact. Only the title of the performance was changed—to "The Human... Pimple!"

The Magic Buchanan Theory

If you found the torrent of information, disinformation, and misinformation contained in Oliver Stone's **JFK** a bit overwhelming in its theatrical three-hour mega-dosage, the Watchdog recommends a closer examination of Warner Home Video's twin-cassette and letterboxed laserdisc release. The most interesting touch that we noticed during our second viewing was the inspired typecasting of Richard Rutowski—who played the subliminal "Death" figure in **THE DOORS** [VW 9:54-58]—as the enigmatic fence shooter who pulls the trigger on JFK! We can't wait to see who Rutowski plays in Stone's upcoming film, **SOUTH CENTRAL**.

Thanks to the cultural turbulence unleashed by **JFK**, Larry Buchanan's rarely-seen **THE TRIAL OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD** (1964), has surfaced on the Burbank Video label. The budget release can be found in department and drug stores for as little as \$5.99, and is in the LP mode. Despite the tape-speed reduction, the B&W film has been crisply transferred to video and looks quite good. The film—a fantasy which speculates what might have happened in court had Oswald not been silenced by Jack Ruby's gun—stars Charles Mazyrack, Arthur Nations, and George Russell.

Fans of Buchanan's rock-oriented conspiracy film **DOWN ON US** aka **BEYOND THE DOORS** (1984)—A-ha! Another Oliver Stone connection!—will particularly enjoy an endless, video-generated crawl tacked onto the beginning of the tape. The crawl ends with this impassioned outcry:

"This picture was shown for the first time in 1964. Due to unwarranted pressures, the picture was suppressed immediately after this first showing. It has never been shown since. Why was this picture suppressed? No satisfactory reason has ever been given."

We respectfully submit that the reputation of the director of **ZONTAR—THE THING FROM VENUS**, **LOVE AND THE ANIMALS**, and **MARS NEEDS WOMEN** speaks for itself.

Interested viewers should be careful not to confuse this tape with David Greene's 4-hour, Made-for-TV film **THE TRIAL OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD** (1977), a less intriguing treatment of the same daydream, recently issued on the Star Classics budget label.



'DOG BITES

RAMSEY'S RUNES

Now that Jacques Tourneur's **NIGHT/CURSE OF THE DEMON** exists in a 95m version on both sides of the Atlantic, I've taken the opportunity to watch both versions and found just one difference. Before the opening credits of **CURSE OF THE DEMON** the commentary spoken over shots of Stonehenge runs as follows: "It has been written since the beginning of time, even onto these ancient stones, that evil supernatural creatures exist in a world of darkness. And it is also said, men using the magic power of the ancient runic symbols can call forth these powers of darkness—the demons of Hell." At this point the title comes up, as it did in the original British release as I remember it. In the 95m version, the voice-over has two extra sentences before the title: "Through the ages men have feared and worshipped these creatures. The practice of witchcraft, the cults of evil have endured and exist to this day." I can't be sure, but my ear leads me to suspect that these may be delivered by a different speaker. I've always assumed that the first speaker is Dana Andrews, since he slurs the words "it is" in a way that is noticeable elsewhere in the film. I'm sure that there was no British theatrical release of the 95m version, particularly since the British Film Institute's **MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN** for January 1958 gives the running time of the version reviewed as 82m.

—Ramsey Campbell
Merseyside, England



EDGE OF RESPECTABILITY

I recently found *Un Hombre Llamado el Diablo*—a Spanish-language tape on the Laguna Films label—at a local used video store with a small Spanish section (mostly Cantinflas comedies).

Not speaking Spanish, I couldn't fully figure out the film, but it appears to be a traditional

western with no fantastic elements. However, check out the box, which features an image of star Vicente Fernandez beneath a looming figure of the Devil—which bears a distinct resemblance to Anthony Perkins in **EDGE OF SANITY!**

—Erich Mees
Dunwoody, GA

CHEAPO PTUSHKO

Just writing to let you know about another video release of **SWORD AND THE DRAGON**, in addition to the three versions you mentioned in VW #9. I recently picked up a \$9.99 budget copy of the film, credited on the box to United Home Video. It is a budget level recording at the EP speed (not even LP!), but it actually looks pretty good. Strangely, the video company credit on the tape shell label and on the recording itself is for VCI, not United. It appears that this version is the same as the most complete version available for \$59.95 on United, clocking in at 82m 22s on my machine. This is the print without the 1987 Jeffrey Hogue wraparound footage, and does not even credit Hogue anywhere on the box or on the recording. The only production credits are those of Joseph Harris-Sig Shore. The print itself looks good, but there are a number of noticeable image jumps at what appear to be splice points between shots (possibly where the original version was edited down to this length).

—Brian Quinn
Massapequa Park, NY

OUGHT TO BE A LAW

Simone Romano reviewed in issue #10 **THE CITIZEN REBELS** [*Il cittadino si ribella*] (1974). I think I saw this Castellari directed actioner on video in English as **STREET LAW**. The box cover art features a man armed with a pump shotgun, wearing a hood. **STREET LAW** climaxed with a savage battle between Franco hero and his enemy. I forgot the release company, but **STREET LAW** was previously available in neighborhood video stores after a mid-1980s release.

—Jeff Segal
Bensalem, PA

Retitlings

DIAMOND MOUNTAIN (Mntex) is a budget retitling of Earl E. Smith's **WISHBONE CUTTER** (1977) a western with horror elements starring Joe Don Baker and Sondra Locke. It was previously released by New World Video as **SHADOW OF CHIKARA**.

KILLER'S CURSE (Iver) and **HANDS OF DEATH** (Lettuce) can be added with **HOSPITAL OF TERROR** (VidAmerica's World's Worst Videos) and **TERROR HOSPITAL** (Marathon) to the list of retitled versions of Al Adamson's **NURSE SHERRI** (1977), which is also known on TV as **BEYOND THE LIVING** (!) The Lettuce box attributes direction to "A. Adams." This almost equals the alias record established by Adamson's **HORROR OF THE BLOOD MONSTERS** (aka **VAMPIRE MEN OF...** ah, forget it!).

PSYCHOTIC (Direct) is Giuseppe Patroni Griffi's **THE DRIVER'S SEAT** (1973), a ludicrous thriller starring Elizabeth Taylor as a cracked spinster and featuring a guest appearance by Andy Warhol (!)

SHOCKED (Edde Entertainment) is Michael Laughlin's **MESMERIZED** (1986), a weird drama starring John Lithgow and Jodie Foster, previously available from Vestron. Edde's box lists it as a "comedy."

THE OPIUM CONNECTION (Bingo) is Terence Young's **THE POPPY IS ALSO A FLOWER** (1966), a ridiculous anti-drug feature starring Yul Brynner and Angie Dickinson that was produced by the United Nations!

According to Leonard Maltin's **MOVIE AND VIDEO GUIDE**, the actual onscreen title of original prints was **POPPIES ARE ALSO FLOWERS**.

THE DEVASTATOR (Ace) should not be confused with the 1985 Cirio H. Santiago feature released by MGM/UA Video. This is actually George Mihalka's **HOSTILE TAKEOVER** (1988), a Canadian thriller starring David Warner and Michael Ironside. It is available on IVE Home Video and Image laser-discs in the states, and on Canadian cassettes through Cineplex-Odeon.

TWISTED (Direct) should not be confused with the 1985 thriller starring Christian Slater available from Sinister Cinema. A thriller shot in Greece, it stars the you-asked-for-it team of George Hamilton, Cameron Mitchell and luscious Luciana Paluzzi.

GREY MATTER (Premiere Entertainment) is Joy N. Houck Jr.'s **THE BRAIN MACHINE** (1972), a laughable mad scientist yarn starring James Best of **THE KILLER SHREWS** and TV's **DUKES OF HAZZARD**. A Howco International Release, naturally.

A CHOICE OF WEAPONS (Paragon) is Kevin Connor's **DIRTY KNIGHT'S WORK** (1976), a macabre British film about a modern day society of "medieval knights" who execute escaped criminals. Donald Pleasance, Peter Cushing and Barbara Hershey star. Previously released by Pan-Canadian Video under the latter title; it is known as **TRIAL BY COMBAT** in England.

—John Charles





Video Around the World

USA

Art, Crime, and High Society Slime

ANDREI RUBLEV

1966, Fox Lorber FLV-1041
HF/LB, \$79.95, 173m 54s

This epic portrait of a 15th Century icon painter's loss and regaining of faith—banned in the Soviet Union until 1971—is one of the great masterpieces of the contemporary Russian cinema, and perhaps the most moving demonstration of what it means to be an artist ever filmed. Scripted by Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky (*RUNAWAY TRAIN*) and directed by Andrei Tarkovsky (*SOLARIS*), the story is presented in a series of poignant vignettes that skip across the years like a stone across a lake, following Andrei from his first youthful success, through his refusal to paint a hellish Last Judgment fresco for a Prince's temple and his disillusionment in humankind after surviving a violent Tatar raid (which forces him to take a man's life), to premature old age as he finds his embittered soul unexpectedly rejuvenated by an impudent boy's plan to cast a giant silver bell. Terrifying, uplifting, and teeming with images with the capacity to scar and inspire. The last

7m of this B&W film—awesome views of the frescoes and murals Rublev painted, which have survived centuries and numerous wars—are presented in color. Like their previous release of *SOLARIS* [VW 10:15-16], Fox Lorber Home Video is presenting this cassette in a "Collectors Letterbox Edition." Unlike *SOLARIS*—which offered too much vertical image (exposing the editor's splices)—this time, the image has been artificially *heightened* by presenting too little horizontal information; the 2:35:1 image is cropped to 1.85:1, favoring the right side of the screen. The main titles, however, are in

A NOTE ON TIMINGS

The timings listed for the following NTSC tapes reflect only the length of the film itself, and do not include such ephemera as video company logos, FBI warnings, supplementary trailers, or MPAA ratings certificates. The only exceptions to this rule are those films in which the soundtrack is first heard while the distributor's logo is still onscreen.

KEY

CC	Closed Captioned
D	Digital
HF	Hi-Fi
LB	Letterboxed
LD	Laserdisc
MA	Multiple Audio
NSR	No Suggested Retail
S	Stereo
SS	Surround Sound



A renegade monk begs to be reinstated in the brotherhood in Tarkovsky's magnificent **ANDREI RUBLEV**.

Russian—not Italian, as with previous, unsatisfactory bootleg editions of this title. The box of this two-cassette package erroneously lists a running time of 185m. Unfortunately, Fox Lorber has no plans to release any of their letterboxed Tarkovskys on laserdisc, but the good news is, they plan to release Tarkovsky's science fiction epic **STALKER** (1979) later in the year.

BLACK LIZARD

1968, Cinevista Video, HF, \$79.95, 83m 41s

Female impersonator Akihiro Maruyama stars as the beautiful criminal mastermind Black Lizard, who kidnaps the teenage daughter (Kikko Matsuoka) of a jeweler to obtain the crowning gem of his private collection, the priceless "Star of Egypt." Her real plan, however, is to have both the jewel and the girl, whom she wants to add to her private "art museum," a subterranean exhibit of the soulless bodies of former lovers. Opposing the arch evil adventuress in this battle of wits is Akechi (Isao Kimura), Japan's most famous

private detective (sic), whose approach to crime-fighting is as romantic as Black Lizard's attraction to crime itself, thus making him of equal appeal to his infamous adversary. Based on a novel by Rampo Edogawa, which was subsequently adapted for the stage by Yukio Mishima (who actually appears as one of Black Lizard's semi-motionless exhibits), **BLACK LIZARD** [*Kurotokage*] is a successful fusion of the weightless

delirium of 1960s Pop Art cinema with heavier, philosophical ponderings about the seeds of criminal behavior, such as those considered by Hiroshi Teshigahara's **THE FACE OF ANOTHER** [*Tanin No Kao*, 1967]; it's stimulating fun, a point hammered home best of all by Maruyama's delightfully infectious laugh. Photographed with intoxicating beauty by Hiroshi Dowaki, Cinevista's transfer preserves not only the film's original 2.35:1 Shochiku GrandScope ratio, but also more chromatic luminosity than is commonly encountered outside a laserdisc presentation. There is also an exquisite score by Isao Tomita, which runs the gamut from plush romantic themes to electric go-go chaos. The director—believe it or not—is Kinji Fukasaku, who later directed **THE GREEN SLIME** [*Gamma Sango uchu Daisakusen*, "Death and the Green Slime," 1968], **TORA TORA TORAI** (1970), **MESSAGE FROM SPACE** [*Uchu Kara No Messeji*, 1978], and **VIRUS** [*Fukkatsu No Hi*, 1980], all of which you'll feel painfully obliged to give a second chance after sampling this dark and bubbly refreshment. The box incorrectly gauges the running time at 86m.

Akihiro Maruyama (with gun) dresses for success in the deliciously campy **BLACK LIZARD**.



THE BLOODY, THE BEAUTIFUL, AND THE BARE

1965, *Something Weird Video*,
\$23.00 ppd., 64m

Time to rewrite the history books! *Something Weird's* Mike Vraney has managed to recover this seminal gore film—never listed or mentioned in any known genre reference book—from the Oblivion to which it was immediately consigned. Jack Lowe plays Peter, an experimental artist in search of a commercial outlet for his talents that will not compromise him artistically. He travels to New York City to visit his former art teacher Leo (Brad Scott), who suggests nude photography as an area of work “where you can do what you want and still make money.” The first 48m of Sande N. Johnsen's film consists of nothing more than believable artistic discussions, book-stocked apartments, and innocuous photosessions, thereafter bringing Peter's latent blood fetish to center stage, when a model's cut finger (and red nail polish) arouses him to murder. The fact that this lone surviving print has turned red over the years actually enhances this thematic angle, though it's never explained how Peter is able to stand wearing a blood-red sweater in some earlier scenes. With its attractive models and extremely gory *denouement*, the film lives up to its lurid title and is somewhat better-acted than Herschell Gordon Lewis' similarly themed **COLOR ME BLOOD RED** (also '65). Produced by AIC. Ruban and scripted by “Anna Marie.”

GRASS

1925, *Milestone Film & Video*,
HF/S, \$39.95, 70m

This engrossing silent documentary (subtitled “A Nation's Battle For Life”) was the first cinematic collaboration of Merian C.

Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack; it traces the migratory instincts of Mankind back to the “Forgotten People,” Persia's Bakhtyari tribe. In the company of the Bakhtyari, Cooper, Schoedsack, and Marguerite Chapman document the seasonal uprooting of the 50,000 member tribe and their 48-day migration across unbelievably torturous terrain—with their livestock!—toward the grassy promise of Iran, where their animals can graze and continue to keep the tribe alive. The primal ingenuity of the Bakhtyari is remarkable—as they hammer trails into the icy snow in their bare feet, and cross treacherous waters on goatskin floats—but so is the daring ingenuity of the filmmakers, who endured unfilmed difficulties to procure breathtaking shots of human resilience. (Cooper recorded his behind-the-scenes story of the film in a book, also called **GRASS**, published the same year.) Aside from capturing one of the epic dramas of civilization for all time, the film carries a residual importance for genre fans, since it allows younger generations to see where Cooper and Schoedsack were coming from when they made **KING KONG** (1933); **GRASS**, being the kind of film Carl Denham would have made, provides a valuable index to the sort of expectations audiences must have brought to that film's premiere—not to mention the team's own dramatic leap of imagination from documentary to fantasy. Milestone Film & Video has given these ancient and primally effective images an effective selection of color tints and a flavorful new Iranian score, presented in vivid stereo. This is one of four films in Milestone's consistently gripping series “The Age of Exploration, 1912-1933,” which also includes Murnau's exquisite **TABU** (1931), a story about a Tahitian man who falls in love with a young girl scheduled for a tribal sacrifice;

90° SOUTH (1913), a stunning first-hand account of Captain Robert Scott's tragic race to the South Pole; and Edward S. Curtis' **IN THE LAND OF THE WAR CANOES** (1914), an anthropological study of the Kwakiutl Indians. Four additional titles in the series are scheduled for release on September 30, including Cooper and Schoedsack's long-lost masterpiece, **CHANG** (1927).

MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN

1991, *Warner Home Video* 12310,
D/S/SS/CC, \$94.99, 98m 50s

John Carpenter's latest film—a return to mainstream, big-budget filmmaking—isn't one of his best, but it's better than you've probably heard. Chevy Chase plays a vague stock market analyst who, shortly after making a romantic connection that promises to bring definition and meaning to his life, is rendered invisible by an industrial accident. Desperately drawn to the newfound object of his affections (Daryl Hannah), Chase becomes the object of a manhunt, driven by an ambitious government agent (Sam Neill) with similarly invisible criminal tendencies. Based on a novel by H.F. Saint, the film (scripted by Robert Collector & Dale Olsen, then revised by William Goldman) falls short of its blockbuster intentions by maintaining a certain remoteness from the romantic ache at the heart of the piece, and failing to delineate in practice the different kinds of “invisibility” shared by Chase and Neill's characters, as intriguingly touched upon in the dialogue. To make matters worse, Carpenter's trademark use of Panavision (an anamorphic 2:35:1 process) is severely amputated on this cropped cassette, which imposes more invisible men on this production than was desired. (At one point, Neill refers to “Morrissey here,” but



Sam Neill is forced to escort an invisible Chevy Chase to safety in John Carpenter's *MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN*.

there's no Morrissey there!) A magical exchange during Chase and Hannah's first meeting, originally composed with them facing one another from opposite sides of the screen, has been re-edited into separate closeup shots, shattering the moment's intimacy. Industrial Light & Magic's invisibility effects are spectacular, however, and Chase's inability to see his own body leads to some predictably amusing slapstick sequences. Perhaps necessarily to procure a name star for the part, the film alternately presents its hero as invisible (the movie's POV) and *visible*, allowing us to identify and sympathize with a character we really don't know very well prior to his disappearance. The film features an uncharacteristic (for Carpenter) score by Shirley Walker, but the soundtrack has been given one of the most creative stereo surround treat-

ments we've heard in awhile. Mildly recommended, but ably-equipped souls who are seriously interested are directed to Warner's *letter-boxed* laserdisc, reasonably priced at \$29.98.

PASSION IN THE SUN

1964, *Something Weird Video*, \$23.00 ppd., 69m 39s

A violent, misshapen geek (Mike Butts) breaks free from his "cage" (actually part of an unused ferris wheel) at a Texas amusement park and runs amuck. We don't see him again for another 45m. In the meantime, two kidnappers abduct a small-time stripper (Josette Velague) and, after a lengthy—and hilariously public—slugfest in the backseat of their convertible, she manages to escape into the woods. The fact that a gunman is pursuing her doesn't

prevent Josette from taking breaks for a skinny dip and a topless nap (during which she dreams of her own strip act)! Eventually, the stripper's plight merges with the geek's forgotten rampage to provide one of the silliest climaxes ever filmed. The "action" is accompanied by a hypnotically monotonous bass guitar loop, and is periodically interrupted by exotic dances by "The Sans Souci Girls." Filmed near Galveston, Texas by the incredible Dale Berry (who also plays Sgt. Mike), this film would be perfectly at home on a shelf with Coleman Francis' **THE BEAST OF YUCCA FLATS** (1961) and not much else; however, stripped of its nudie padding, its sordid carnival *milieu* and shuffling subhuman geek curiously foreshadow the work of a fellow Texan: Tobe Hooper's **THE FUNHOUSE** (1981; VW 11:19-20). **PASSION IN THE**



Ronald Warren shows Sandra Lynn his private rose garden in Albert Zugsmith's delirious *PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS*.

SUN was most likely given its anachronistic title for double-billing with nudist camp co-features. Berry also directed **HOT BLOODED WOMAN** (1965), **HIP HOT & 21** (1965, which includes some rough trade scenes that recall a B&W, no-budget **BLUE VELVET**) and **HOT THRILLS WARM CHILLS** (1966), which are also available from Something Weird.

PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS

1966, *Something Weird Video*, \$23.00 ppd., 100m 6s

This ambitious and bizarre nudie—also known as **ON HER BED OF ROSES**—takes its Latin title from Dr. Richard von Krafft-Ebing's 1886 seminal case study of sexual aberration, so titled to attract professional colleagues and discourage prurient curiosity. Writer-producer Albert Zugsmith's modern-day scenario, which has no such agenda, is based primarily on Krafft-Ebing's "Case #123" (the book contains 237 others, well worth reading): Stephen

(Ronald Warren), a sheltered young adult dominated by a reclusive mother, finds his only form of sexual expression in a bizarre rose fetish; it is his misfortune to fall in love with Melissa (Sandra Lynn), the nymphomaniac next-door, whose own mother habitually seduces all of her boyfriends. "It was the strangest courtship you could ever imagine," Melissa confides to her stoic psychiatrist, Dr. Kraft, initiating therapy on the morning after Stephen's suicide. Reportedly, Zugsmith filmed his script experimentally—in sequence, exactly as written, allowing his non-professional actors to interpret their roles organically and *without direction*. That said, this film—like Zugsmith's other directorial excursions, most notably **CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER** (aka **SOULS FOR SALE**, 1962) and **THE INCREDIBLE SEX REVOLUTION** (1966)—ultimately succumbs to the limitations of its cast and budget, but contains sequences of undeniable fascination; in this case, a haunting 15m silent prologue of Stephen's last minutes on

earth. How could such an accomplished sequence be non-directed? Warren (who won his role after selling pots and pans to Zugsmith's wife!) is quite good as the pathetic petal-pusher, and "Dr. Kraft" is played stiffly by an actual psychiatrist (Dr. Lee Gladden, the film's technical advisor). Creative and decidedly oddball, **PSYCHOPATHIA SEXUALIS** is a cinematic aberration in its own right.

SOCIETY

1989, *Republic Home Video*, 3787, HF/S/CC, \$79.95 (VHS), \$29.98 (LD), 94m 17s

High school athlete William "Bill" Whitney (Billy Warlock) feels alienated from his well-to-do family but can't explain why, until circumstances reveal that Beverly Hills society is comprised of non-human organisms who indulge in a slimy bio-bacchanalia called "shunting." Brian Yuzna's directorial debut—finally surfacing in its native country after three long years—is a contemporary **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS** re-envisioned with barely disguised borrowings from the image banks of hardcore pornography. References to hardcore clichés abound: group sex, incest, voyeurism, transvestism, sex dolls, facial ejaculation shots, hair fetishes, strange positions, hot-tubbing and, in a shockingly explicit scene that recalls Russ Meyer at his most ruthless—*fisting*. The climactic excesses are so audacious and unexpected that it's tempting to praise this film overgenerously; it wants to be great but can't quite manage it, like a prematurely-written masterpiece entrusted to inexperienced talent. The script's worst miscalculation is asking us to accept an attractive high school athlete as an *outsider*; in terms of the filming, the final cut would have been stronger without the assembly hall scenes and the pointless



Tim Bartell experiences "the thrill of the shunt" in Brian Yuzna's gonographic SOCIETY.

character of Mrs. Carlin. Republic's transfer shows little evidence of cropping and features an effective Ultra-Stereo sound mix.

For unexplained reasons, Republic's version is almost 5m shorter than the now-discontinued Japanese import tape/disc on the Pony Canyon label (PCLP-00053, ¥5,900; 99m3s). The missing footage, culled from five individual sequences, follows:

1. Shortly after arriving at Ted's party, Bill sees Clarisse across the dance floor and they are drawn magnetically into one another's arms. They dance for a minute, Clarisse asking where Shawna (Bill's bratty girlfriend) is, and displaying a surprising knowledge of his mother. Shawna and her girlfriend see them dancing and exhibit quiet outrage. Clarisse and Bill's conversation is interrupted

when Milo crashes the party, asking Bill if he knows where Blanchard is. Clarisse wanders away as they talk, Milo warning Bill to watch out because Clarisse has "a strange mother." Bill soon begs off from Milo, pursuing Clarisse into a tent he has seen her enter. Republic's version joins Bill's arrival to his sighting of Clarisse entering the tent; Milo does not appear at all. The ambient party music has been re-edited to sound uninterrupted.

2. After Bill is tossed into the pool by Ted and his cronies, we cut to Clarisse's house. Inside her bedroom, Bill is soaking wet, seated at the foot of her bed, trying to rub some warmth back into his hands. Clarisse enters, kneeling before him in a negligée, and says, "Better get out of those wet things." The Republic version cuts from the exterior shot of

her house to their lovemaking in-progress. The previous scene's cutaway to Shawna and her girlfriend explains their presence outside Clarisse's house in this scene, watching the lovers' silhouettes on the shade from a parked car.

3. When Bill discovers Petrie's bloody corpse in the park, he runs until he finds himself outside Clarisse's place. He knocks on the door until she answers. Bill seems confused to see her and asks what she's doing there. "I live here," she answers. "Lemme use your phone, huh?" he says, pushing past her into the house. This explains why Clarisse is suddenly accompanying Bill during the subsequent police investigation of the crime site. The Republic version jumps from Bill's sighting of the familiar house to the police investigation.

4. A brief shot of Milo, shifting gears to pursue the ambulance carrying the drugged Bill to the hospital, is also missing.

5. After Bill plunges his fist into Ted's vitals, there are two missing shots: one shows Bill's fingers poking both of Ted's eyes out of their sockets, and the other is a lingering view of Ted's exposed innards once his body has been yanked inside-out.

The Pony Canyon import, which has just been discontinued, is unquestionably the superior version. Republic incorrectly lists the running time of their version at the original 99m length. It's serendipitous that Republic, of all companies, should finally release this film. They also distribute Don Siegel's **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS** (1955), as well as the world-famous Republic serials, the best of which were directed by... *William Witney!*

SPACE THING

1968, *Something Weird Video*,
\$23.00 ppd., 69m 30s

This \$16,000 epic was produced in semi-disguise by David F. Friedman in the wake of Kubrick's **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY**. In the writer-producer's own words, "It makes **PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE** look like **CITIZEN KANE**." According to the credits (body painted on a nude model), the film was scripted by "Cosmo Politan," photographed by "Sy Kloppe," and key-gripped by "Allwes Dropsit." The direction is credited to B. Ron Elliot (aka Byron Mabe), who abandoned the film after an early disagreement with Friedman, who completed it. All of the acting credits are pseudonymous. SF enthusiast Jim Grunella ("Bert Black," aka Steve Vincent) is too hooked on pulp magazine space fiction to concentrate on his wife's sexual needs. After consenting to a close encounter that's more merciful



Dave (ROCKETEER) Stevens' original art for
Something Weird Video's SPACE THING.

than sincere, he dreams that he is a sex-repulsed "Planetarian," left shipless by space pirates, who is rescued by a ship of sex-obsessed "Terranians," led by the voluptuous lesbian Captain Mother ("April Playmate," aka Carla Peterson). And what set design: the Terranians' mess hall is built around an actual kitchen table,

with overturned plastic trash cans for seats, and its control room is furnished with bar stools! Photographed in color, the film contains frontal female nudity and numerous *el cheapo* fantastic elements, such as invisibility pills, asteroid showers (they look like the *sponges* you'd find in a shower), and our Planetarian

hero's photo of "my lovely family." Mercy Montello and Danny Martin are also featured. The tape may be good for a laugh, but the real selling point is *Something Weird's* packaging: a gorgeous, exclusive, full color painting by acclaimed **ROCKETEER** artist Dave Stevens!

THE STORY OF BOYS AND GIRLS

1990, Fox Lorber FLV-1055, D, \$89.95, 92m

This sensual pastorate—about the first meeting of two families about to be united by marriage, one from the city and one from the country—cannot be described as fantasy, but it warrants mention here as the first domestic release of a Pupi Avati film since his astonishing **REVENGE OF THE DEAD** [Zeder, 1979]. The two films share certain cast members, as well as an obsession with the darker truths underlying the sunniest realities, the frailties that strengthen familial bonds. While spending time with these two very different families, we see that their most direct and meaningful communications occur not during their formal assembly, but rather in its belches, its broken winds, its gross and inappropriate flirtations, its lustful breakaways to secluded haystacks. These, Avati seems to say, are the stuff of our real history as human beings, and it is through the *unpresentability* of these occurrences that we learn to whisper intimacies and form couples. The centerpiece of this sage, autumnal jewel—subtitled "A Feast for Lovers"—is a fabulous twenty-course rural meal, guaranteed to stoke your appetite. Scored by Riz Ortolani, with themes that distinctly recall Morricone's score for **CINEMA PARADISO**. In Italian with English subtitles in yellow. [For more information about Avati's career, see VW 3:28-37.]

UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD

1991, Warner Home Video 12312, D/S/SS/CC, \$92.99, 157m 21s

Clocking-in at approximately two-and-a-half hours, this latest film by German director Wim Wenders (**THE AMERICAN FRIEND**, **WINGS OF DESIRE**) is the first genuine science fiction *epic* filmed in the English language since Kubrick's **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY** (1968). After a footloose married woman (Solveig Sommerfeldt) agrees to transport some stolen money across the French border, she is robbed by an enigmatic con-man (William Hurt) whom she pursues relentlessly around the world, as he uses an experimental device—designed by his father (Max von Sydow)—to record the faces of distant places and distant relatives for later playback into the brain of his blind mother (Jeanne Moreau). Sommerfeldt (who co-wrote the scenario with Wenders) isn't much of an actress, and the first third of the film—divided between her wanderlust and non-stop aural glimpses of the star-studded soundtrack album (Lou Reed, Talking Heads, Can, etc.)—is both repellent and solicitous; however, once the poignant point of Hurt's mysterious travels is explained, annoyance shifts to intrigue and, by the time Moreau and von Sydow unseat their co-stars as the centers of attention, the film becomes extremely potent and gripping. Sam Neill is especially good as Sommerfeldt's pensive, understanding (and quietly suffering) husband, who also serves as the film's narrator. Not a masterpiece, but who knows what we're really seeing—the American and British release prints are reportedly 23m shorter than the original German prints; moreover, Wenders has prepared a *five hour* mini-series edition of the film (beautifully photographed by Robby Muller in 2.35:1 HDTV)

for German television, which will be subsequently released there as a tri-pack videocassette. Warner has also announced a letterboxed laserdisc release, priced at \$34.98.

ANIMATION

By G. Michael Dobbs

LI'L ABNER—1944-1945

RCA/Columbia Home Video, 35m

If you're an animation completist or if you're very, very curious, watching this tape is probably a necessity. Otherwise, this collection of five Columbia cartoons—produced by Dave Fleischer and directed by Ben Wickersham—may be too much for you. Simply put, these adaptations of Al Capp's classic comic strip are awful. Undoubtedly, someone at Columbia had hoped the same magic which happened when Max and Dave Fleischer brought Popeye the Sailor from the comic page to the screen would occur again. Columbia's animation unit had never produced a popular character or series, and the artistry of these shorts is on the same level as a Terrytoon Gandy Goose or Sourpuss offering. The problem is that the source material is so rich, from both an art and story point of view, the crew at Screen Gems was simply overwhelmed. The results are painful to watch.

THE RETURN OF THE KING

1979, Solar Home Video, 96m

For anyone seeking a cinematic introduction to the revered works of fantasy by the late J.R.R. Tolkien, this is not the place to start. Animation producers Arthur Rankin Jr. and Jules Bass secured the rights to **THE HOBBIT** (prequel to **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**), and



Bilbo Baggins in the Rankin/Bass production of THE HOBBIT, a prequel to their RETURN OF THE KING.

the last book of the "Ring" trilogy *THE RETURN OF THE KING* to make two television productions. This feature-length effort provides an interesting stylistic contrast to Ralph Bakshi's *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* (1978). Whereas Bakshi attempted to give his work the look of full animation with rotoscoping, Rankin and Bass altered their trademark character design (usually by MAD Magazine artist Paul Coker Jr.), adapting a soft earth-tone color scheme. The change of style did nothing to improve their highly limited animation or to make this film any more memorable than the legion of the other Rankin/Bass animated TV specials. Most of the story is told by John Huston as Gandolf the Wizard, and the script is so muddled one is left totally confused unless already familiar with the work. One can't tell an epic animated adventure story with just a tad more movement

than one might find in an episode of *CLUTCH CARGO*. As with many limited animation projects, the animators were not allowed to match the emotion delivered by the voice actors, Orson Bean, John Huston, Roddy McDowell, William Conrad, Theodore Bikel and Brother Theodore. Contrary to the box cover, Hans Conreid is *not* a member of the cast.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: HOW I SPENT MY VACATION

*1991, Warner Home Video,
\$19.95, 80m*

When Steven Spielberg's Amblin Productions announced it would produce an updated version of the classic Warner Brothers characters, many fans howled. Initially, it was believed the show would feature the comic adventures of

Bugs and company as children and fans howled again. The stars of the show, as many of you know, are not the beloved characters of old, but new "younger" versions of the Warner Brothers crowd. There's a selfish duckling, a straight man piglet, a twirling Tasmanian devilette and *two* wascally bunnies. I've caught only bits and pieces of the syndicated series, so naturally I wanted to view this special feature-length "movie." Released only to video, **HOW I SPENT MY VACATION** is a mixed bag for the veteran Warners watcher. The work of six directors, the film sacrificed a cohesive plot for an outline that allows various teams of characters to come up with four stories. While Amblin likes to stress the originality of the new series, the directors and writers pay considerable tribute to Jones, Freleng and Avery. The trademark Warners showbiz caricatures are used fairly heavily, as are Carl Stalling-like musical cues. The character animation is straight out of the Tex Avery School. If they're going to borrow so much from the old, why not use the characters everyone loves instead of these wannabes? I enjoyed this effort far more than most of the contemporary television animation I've seen, but if Steven Spielberg is such a booster of classic American animation, why couldn't he produce this show in the United States?

ASIA

By Erik Sulev

BULLET IN THE HEAD

1992, Cinema City, (LD)

Here's a warning to fans of John Woo's epic 1990 tale of three friends who go to Vietnam in 1967 to seek their fortunes in the black market amidst wartime turbulence,



Jackie Chan stars as his own evil twin in Tsui Hark and Ringo Lam's *TWIN DRAGONS*.

and have their relationships shattered by greed, violence and betrayal. Cinema City, a company which usually releases some of the best HK discs around, has released the 135m **BULLET** in a truncated 120m version! Scenes are constantly snipped and shortened to meet the single disc's programming limitations, resulting in a very annoying two hours. Readers are advised to stick with the year-old Long Shong tape, which presents **BULLET** in its entirety.

HARDBOILED

1992, Long Shong

HK action director supreme John Woo reteams once again with Chow Yun Fat and Tony Leung (from **BULLET IN THE HEAD**, not Tony Leung Ka Fai from **A BETTER TOMORROW 3**), to create an incredibly violent 130m roller-coaster ride as police sharp-

shooter Tequila (Chow) teams up with an emotionally scarred hitman (Leung) to eliminate a deadly gun-runner. If the combination of blood, bullets, and babies sounds intriguing, then see **HARDBOILED** immediately! The final 45m stand-off in the hospital leaves the viewer with no doubt that Woo is simply the finest action director working *anywhere* in the world. Slightly letterboxed at 1.75:1 to accommodate the subtitles in the frame.

A JOHN WOO FILM

1986, Rainbow Audio & Video

Someone's poor translation skills has resulted in this film's videojacket being given this ludicrous retitling. The real title, quickly evident as the credits roll, is **HEROES SHED NO TEARS**—a fast-paced, brutally violent action film taking place in the jungle and wilderness, rather than Woo's

more common urban settings. Woo made this film prior to the trendsetting **A BETTER TOMORROW** and, as a result, it has been wrongfully overlooked. A world-weary mercenary tries to keep himself and his young son alive as they are pursued by the vengeful lam Ching Ying (**MR. VAMPIRE** series), who observes the "eye for an eye" code of justice. Not letterboxed, but subtitled, and highly recommended for all John Woo fans.

TWIN DRAGONS

1992, Vidi

Those who cringe at Jackie Chan's comic facial expressions may want to avoid his latest film, co-directed by Tsui Hark and Ringo Lam, since there's not one but two Jackies! Released as a fund-raiser for the Hong Kong Director's Guild, this is the sometimes uneven, often ridiculous, tale of two twins

separated at birth, who grow up to lead very different lives: one as a concert pianist, the other as a street-smart, would-be hoodlum. The film manages to entertain on the strength of Chan and his co-stars, particularly the exquisite Maggie Cheung and (Nina) Li Chi. Eagle-eyed viewers should be able to spot several HK directors and personalities in various cameos (Tsui appears as a wily card-player), but the Mandarin video release deletes a gag featuring Eric Tsang (director of **ACES GO PLACES 1**) as a porno director discussing a bestiality scene on the phone! The 2.35:1 aspect ratio has been cropped to approximately 1.75:1.

CANADA

By John Charles

BUSTER'S BEDROOM

1990, Alliance Home Video, HF/S, \$109.95, 103m 54s

Rebecca Horn directed this German/Canadian/Portuguese production, which got a brief theatrical release in Toronto last spring before turning up on video. A teenage girl named Micha (Amanda Ooms) is obsessed with Buster Keaton and journeys to Nirvana House, an institution where the comedian stayed briefly during the 1930s. When the head physician is accidentally killed, the hospital is taken over by O'Connor (Donald Sutherland), a venom-drinking "doctor" who believes that immobility is the cure for any ailment. The other patients include Geraldine Chaplin as an accomplished diver who is convinced that she is paralyzed and Valentina Cortese as a schizophrenic actress who believes that her butterfly collection houses the souls of her dead lovers. This absurdist comedy suffers from the same problem as Adam

Rifkin's **THE DARK BACKWARD** (1991): in the rush to make the characters eccentric and grotesque, the screenwriters forgot to make their story interesting or entertaining. The most disappointing aspect of the film is that the Keaton angle is forgotten early on, and the director provides precious few glimpses of the master comic's work. Frequent Bergman collaborator Sven Nykvist provided the surprisingly humdrum cinematography. Mary Woronov has an early bit part, providing one of the film's few bright moments. The source print is worn at reel change points and the sound is annoyingly shrill and distorted.

IN THE BELLY OF THE DRAGON

1989, Alliance Home Video, HF, \$29.95, 100m 29s

Tired of scraping together a living by distributing circulars, Lou (David La Haye) volunteers to be a guinea pig for a medical conglomerate that seeks a cure to the common cold. This is just a front, however, for research conducted by Dr. Lucas (Marie Tifo), a chain-smoking mad scientist who seeks to find a way to activate the dormant 88% of the human brain. The experiments cause patients to project vivid mental imagery but also induce rapid aging. This French-Canadian film by director Yves Simoneau (**PERFECTLY NORMAL**) is a unique but very uneven yarn that mixes serious commentary about the sinister nature of scientific research with broad comedy that seems to have dropped in from another movie. The antics of Lou's bumbling junkmail colleagues Steve (Remy Girard) and Bozo (Michel Cote) are amusing during the first hour but become distracting when injected into the dead serious plotting of the movie's final two reels. The two disparate components work well

on their own but don't mesh leaving one wishing that Simoneau had given Steve and Bozo their own vehicle. The best parts take place at the Institute which is represented by stark, Cronenberg-style sterility on the inside and cartoonish matte paintings outside. A mixed bag overall, but offbeat enough to warrant a look. Print and transfer quality are excellent. Although its theatrical release in English Canada was in a subtitled version, Alliance Home Video is only offering the film in a dubbed edition. The lip sync is very good but some of the voices are ill-chosen.

MIRAGE

1998, Malofilm Video, HF, \$89.95, 83m 47s

This New World production is a low-budget variation on Steven Spielberg's classic telefilm **DUEL** (1971). Instead of taking place on deserted stretches of highway, this is set solely in the desert. A group of obnoxious teenagers on an outing find themselves stalked by a grenade-throwing psychopath in a black pickup truck who strikes without warning or reason. The premise certainly has potential (there is literally no place to hide) but this one fumbles the ball at every turn. Like director Bill Crain's subsequent effort **MIDNIGHT FEAR** (VW:12), **MIRAGE** revels in the most obvious and infuriatingly simplistic aspects of slasher horror. We only learn two things about the killer: he hates tanned, blonde California beach types and he can't be killed *no matter what*. The guys are macho jerks and the girls are brainless (and frequently topless) bimbos. R. Christopher Biggs provides some over-the-top gore effects but, with these characters, he'd get the same dramatic impact by blasting holes in sides of beef. The source print is grainy and ugly looking, possibly the result of a



Count Downe (Harry Nilsson) and Merlin the Magician (Ringo Starr) in the down-for-the-count *SON OF DRACULA*.

16mm blow-up. Dust off your copies of **DUEL** and **A BAY OF BLOOD** instead.

SIEGE

1982, Norstar Home Video, HF, \$34.95, 83m 36s

This is an effective Canadian knockoff of John Carpenter's **ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13** (1976), set in Halifax during the May 1981 police strike. A group of right-wing fanatics called "The New Order" raid a gay bar and systematically execute all the patrons, save for one who manages to escape into a nearby apartment building. The tenants refuse to turn him over and must defend themselves using whatever weapons they can fashion. **SIEGE** lacks the slickness of Carpenter's film but, like many good low-budget chillers, the dearth of technical gloss works in

its favor. The results are tense, dark and crudely effective. Unfortunately, the widescreen image is horrendously cropped by an inept pan-and-scan transfer which constantly lops people out of the frame, ruins close-ups and makes for some mighty crowded compositions. This impressive thriller is worth seeing even under these conditions. Not released until 1985. Directed by Paul Donovan and Maura O'Connell; the former would go on to do **DEF-CON 4** (1984) and **A SWITCH IN TIME/NORMAN'S AWESOME EXPERIENCE** (1986), neither of which display the promise shown here.

SON OF DRACULA

1974, Marquis Video, OP, 90m 41s

Quite different from the 1943 film of the same name, this is a little-seen British horror/comedy/

musical by director Freddie Francis, produced by Apple Films. Harry Nilsson stars as "Count Downe" who, as son of Dracula, is destined to be crowned "Overlord of the Netherworld" in a ceremony presided over by Merlin the Magician (producer Ringo Starr). Three days prior to the ritual, the Count falls in love with a human woman, prompting him to ask Dr. Van Helsing (Dennis Price) to transform him into a mortal. Meanwhile, the immortal Baron Frankenstein (Freddie Jones) has designs on the throne himself. Nilsson and Starr are both awful and few of the eight songs performed are memorable. Nevertheless, this dated and uneven effort boasts enough interesting ingredients to make it worth a look if you can track down a copy. Francis trots out enjoyably campy versions of such horror icons as Nosferatu, The Wolfman,



and

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CRESCENDO

STEFANIE POWERS JAMES OLSON MARGARETTA SCOTT JANE LAPOTAIRE JOSS ACKLAND 

Screenplay by JIMMY SANGSTER & ALFRED SHAUGHNESSY Produced by MICHAEL CARRERAS Directed by ALAN GIBSON TECHNICOLOR®
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Frankenstein's Monster, The Mummy, Medusa and Fu Manchu. While much of the humor falls flat, the obvious affection for the classics of the genre makes up for a few of the film's deficiencies. Rock luminaries John Bonham, Peter Frampton and Keith Moon appear in the Count's band. The video transfer is too dark during night sequences while the source print is damaged at reel change points and flutters noticeably throughout. Also known as **YOUNG DRACULA**.

FRANCE

By Lucas Balbo

L'ASSASSIN SERA A TRIPOLI

(*"The Killer Will Be in Tripoli"*)
1958, Dynasty Vidéo, OP

Originally released in Germany as *Romarel das Mädchen mit den grünen Augen* ("Romerei, the Girl with Green Eyes"), this German-Italian co-production features

Reggie Nalder (who died last November of bone cancer) as a goodie, Werner Peters as a villain with a wooden hand, and French starlet Dominique Wilms as a bitchy spy. It is the story of a business mogul who fights against an invisible enemy—"Mr. Mazareff"—whom he tries to identify with the help of a super-lucid green-eyed girl. The emphasis is more on action (fist-fights, exotic dances, murders, horseback riding) than fantasy or horror. The film has maintained a charming 1950s naiveté, and is most enjoyable for that.

LA MANNEQUIN DEFIGURE

(*"The Disfigured Mannequin"*)
1969, Warner Home Vidéo, rental only

This is the French version of Alan Gibson's **CRESCENDO**, one of the last psychological dramas produced by Hammer Films. Set in the south of France (only a few exteriors were actually shot there), the film stars James Olson as the crippled son of an ultra-possessive mother, whose relationship is strained when Stephanie

Powers (**DIE! DIE MY DARLING** aka **FANATIC**, 1965) arrives at their villa to study the life of the late father, a famous composer. Olson, fresh from Hammer's space-western **MOON ZERO TWO** (1969), is not especially convincing, but Jane Lapotaire (mostly seen in character roles on British TV) is enjoyably campy as a sadistic French maid, helping us to forget the too-tedious talents of Powers. Gibson tries to spark this overfamiliar **PSYCHO** variation (written by Jimmy Sangster and Alfred **CAT GIRL** Shaughnessy) with inventive camera angles and troubling dreamsequences. Unfortunately, though the box lists an 88m running time, the tape itself is only 83m long, the same length as its American double-bill release with Gibson's **DRACULA A.D. 1972**. British sources credit a 95m running time, which implies that even more footage may have been deleted from the export version, though nothing in particular seems to be missing. Presented in its original 1.85:1 ratio.



ERRATA

• **7:6** Premiere Video's **BLOOD SHACK** is also known as **THE CHOOPER**, not **THE CHOPPER**.

• **10:18** In the review of *Patrick vive ancora*, Bruno Mattei was incorrectly cited as director of Media Home Entertainment's **BURIAL GROUND**. The real director was Andrea Bianchi, as stated in the preceding review of *La Mano di la Terror*.

• **11:5** **THE WAILING**—which is available on the HQV label, not HGV—contains an extra 5m sequence not present in Wizard Video's **FEAR**, but the overall running time is actually 2m shorter.

• **11:24** Our reference to **SPELLBOUND**'s greatly condensed "20m" dream sequence (so described by Ingrid Bergman herself) is proven erroneous by James Bigwood's fascinating article "Solving a **SPELLBOUND** Puzzle" (*AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER*, June 1991). Ms. Bergman's memory of the sequence's original length was greatly exaggerated.

• **11:53** **CLIMAX** (1955) was distributed as an LP-speed cassette by Goodtimes Home Video. Beware this item, which was inadvertently recorded at SP... and subsequently kicks into rewind halfway through the program!

• **12:6** The original title of Private Screenings' **BARING IT ALL** was in fact **UTTERLY WITHOUT REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE**.

• **12:7** Mirko Valentin did not play the dwarf in **CASTLE OF THE LIVING DEAD** (1964); that role was played by Antonio de Martino, who appears in **ANN AND EVE**.

• **12:16** The last line of G. Michael Dobbs' review of **JAN SVANKMEJER: ALCHEMIST OF THE SURREAL** should have read: "A final note: while Svankmejer wrote, directed, and designed these signature efforts, he didn't do the actual animation."

• **12:62** A section of Jonathan Rosenbaum's letter was inadvertently omitted by a word processing error. The first paragraph of his letter follows with the missing parts in italics:

"A brief note of clarification about my liner notes to the Criterion laserdisc of **CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**—cited and questioned by Tim Lucas at the beginning of his excellent article [VW 10:42-60]. The only reason why I failed to mention a third and (in my opinion) better version of **MR. ARKADIN** in these notes—a version discussed by Lucas elsewhere *in this issue—is that I was under strict instructions from Criterion not to bring this matter up. I reluctantly agreed to this suppression of information only because I knew I would be writing about this version elsewhere* (in the Jan-Feb **FILM COMMENT**), and I'm mentioning this anecdote now because I think it dramatizes the thin line separating criticism from publicity in most liner notes—a general problem that readers of this magazine should be alerted to."

• **12:64** We neglected to mention that the director of **KISS ME QUICK** is pseudonymously named "Seymour Tuchus" (!) in the film's spoken credits.

[Thanks to Lucas Balbo, J. Kent Coscarelly, Lorne Marshall, Jonathan Rosenbaum, and Robert Selvig.]

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Michael Mann's **MANHUNTER**

Spread Your Wings and Learn to Die

1986, D/S/SS, Warner Home Video 411,
\$19.95 (VHS), \$39.95 (LD/LB), 120m 14s,
Showtime/Movie Channel, 124m 24s

By Tim Lucas



SINCE THE RELEASE of Jonathan Demme's acclaimed film **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**—

based on the novel by Thomas Harris—a good deal of retrospective interest has been accorded to an earlier Harris adaptation, Michael Mann's 1986 feature **MANHUNTER**. It was **MANHUNTER**, based on Harris' 1981 novel **RED DRAGON**, that introduced to the screen the character of Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lector (whose name is spelled throughout as "Lektor," and in the end credits as "Leckter"); indeed, when it made its network television debut last fall on NBC-TV, during the sweeps that followed **SILENCE**'s boxoffice success, **MANHUNTER** was savvily retitled **RED DRAGON: THE RETURN OF HANNIBAL LECTOR** and won high ratings.

MANHUNTER—one of several feature films orphaned by the financial failure of the short-lived DeLaurentiis Entertainment Group—has finally resurfaced as a letterboxed laserdisc from Warner Home Video. While it is a superb edition of the film in its own right, it should be noted that this theatrical version differs noticeably from the cable version that continues to play on Showtime and The Movie Channel. The cable version, exactly 4m 10s longer than the DEG edition, is a "director's cut" which Mann unveiled in 1989 for an aborted Movie Channel series of similar reconstructions. This alternative version of **MANHUNTER** continues to appear on cable today without any reference to its status as a "director's cut." The release of the theatrical version on disc seems a good excuse to compare the two versions and make their distinctions better known.

The opening credits of both versions are presented differently. While the content is the same, the theatrical version presents the titles in fluorescent

green letters against a royal blue background. After Mann's directorial credit, the rich blue pales as we dissolve into the sky above the Florida beach where FBI agent Jack Crawford (Dennis Fariña) is attempting to lure retired agent Will Graham (William Petersen) back into active duty. The cable titles, on the other hand, are mostly plain and white, and flashed over the dialogue scene as it proceeds. The credits were seemingly refilmed in this way to compress the expanded film's length as much as possible, but the rhythm of their presentation tends to distract the viewer from the tensions underlying the conversation at hand. Graham—an innovative agent who identifies serial killers by identifying *with* them—initially demurs from Crawford's invitation to tackle two unsolved family massacres in Birmingham and Atlanta, because he is still unhealed, still not himself, since thinking through the capture of Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lector. (For the purposes of this article, I feel obliged to retain the original spelling.)

The aspect ratios of the two **MANHUNTER** variants are bewildering to compare. Warner's letterboxed disc faithfully reproduces cinematographer Dante Spinotti's original, Super 35mm (non-anamorphic 2.35:1) framing, while the cable version tends to unmask the entire frame, with the exception of some individual cropped shots. The cable version frequently offers more top and bottom information; for instance, during Will's beachside conversation with Crawford, there is a point—prior to Crawford saying "If I really didn't need you to come back, I wouldn't ask"—where Petersen's mouth can be seen at the top of the frame, speaking an excised line that was left unlooped.

After Graham has a violent physical confrontation with **NATIONAL TATTLER** reporter Freddie Lounds (Stephen Lang), he announces to Crawford that he has to see Hannibal Lector "to get back the old mindset." While the theatrical version cuts directly to Lector's blinding white cell, the cable version inserts two scenes of particular import.

*William Petersen as mind-melding
FBI agent Will Graham.*





Freddie Lounds (Stephen Lang) as found after his exclusive interview with the "Tooth Fairy" killer.

The first of these scenes finds Graham alone in his Atlanta hotel room, moving nervously about, alternating between packing, smoking and pacing. The telephone rings. It is his wife Molly (Kim Greist).

WILL: [ANSWERING PHONE] Yeah?

MOLLY: Hey, Hot Shot! You doin' some good?

WILL: Nothin' so you'd notice. I miss ya.

MOLLY: Me too. I miss my husband.

WILL: What's goin' on?

MOLLY: Day-to-day, it's boring. Tell me what you're doing.

WILL: I'm eating room service. They don't have a lock on anything, Molly. There's not enough physical evidence. Or else I haven't done enough with it yet.

MOLLY: Well, are you gonna be in Atlanta long? I mean, I'm not bugging you about coming home; I was just wondering.

WILL: I don't know. I'm goin' to Baltimore tomorrow.

MOLLY: To do what?

WILL: I gotta see somebody.

MOLLY: [PAUSE] I was thinking about painting the kitchen. What color do you like?

Will seems frustrated by the question. There is a pregnant pause.

MOLLY: Will? Are you there?

WILL: I dunno. Let's paint it yellow.

MOLLY: Yellow's kind of a bad color for me. I look green at breakfast.

WILL: Blue, then.

MOLLY: I don't know...

WILL: [TERSELY] Look, paint the damn room battleship gray, what do I care? [PAUSE] Sorry. Look, when I get back, we'll go to the paint store and get some chips and we'll figure out...

MOLLY: Look, Will, I don't know why I'm talking trivia. I called to tell you that I love you and I miss you, and you're doing the right thing. And it's costing you, too, I know that. I'm here. I'm right here. And I'll be here when you come home. I'll meet you if you need me to—anywhere. That's what I called to tell you.

WILL: Molly. I love you.

MOLLY: 'Night.

Will hangs up. He leans forward on his knees, smoking.

At this point, the scene cuts to the Baltimore asylum where Dr. Hannibal Lektor is incarcerated. Will is seated across from the desk of a character familiar to viewers of **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**: Dr. Chilton (Benjamin Hendrickson).

CHILTON: Dr. Bloom called me yesterday, Mr. Graham. Or is it "Dr." Graham?

WILL: I'm not a doctor.

CHILTON: Oh.

WILL: I need to see Dr. Lektor, in as much privacy as possible.

CHILTON: Um... Dr. Lektor will stay in his room. That is the only place where he is not put in full body restraints. One of the walls to the room is a double barrier. I'll have a chair placed just outside.

WILL: I might have to show him some material that could stimulate him.

CHILTON: As long as it's on soft paper. Now, the consensus around here is that the only person who's ever demonstrated any practical understanding of Dr. Hannibal Lektor is you, Mr. Graham. Can you tell me anything about him?

WILL: No.

CHILTON: When you saw Dr. Lektor's murders—their style, so to speak?—were you able to reconstruct his fantasies in your mind? Is that what helped you to identify him?

There is an uncomfortable pause, as if Will is smoldering under this half-assed attempt to psychoanalyze him. After a few moments, he stands to his full height. Ominous.

WILL: I'd like to see Lektor—now.

CHILTON: [FRIGHTENED] Sure.



Brian Cox as Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lektor.

The next exclusive-to-cable scene is a slight extension to the dialogue between Will and Jack Crawford, after Will has consented to be interviewed by Lounds—an attempt to bait the killer which backfires in an unexpected way. Whereas the theatrical version cuts to the next scene after Will answers “no” to Crawford’s offhanded “Anything yet?,” the cable version includes this slight addenda:

CRAWFORD: I’m havin’ the Bureau fly Molly up tonight.

WILL: Huh?

CRAWFORD: Well, she says she can get away for one night. [PROBES WILL’S REACTION] I do somethin’ wrong?

WILL: No. It’s just the setting, Jack. Thanks.

In both versions of the film, the scene is followed with a scene of Will being secretly supplied with “safety slugs” [liquid Teflon bullets in copper casings] for his .44 handgun by a concerned ballistics agent. The theatrical version cuts from this scene to that night’s botched sting operation, a scene preceded in the cable version by Molly’s conjugal visit to Will’s hotel room.

Will is standing naked in front of an open window, the pane of which catches his reflection. Molly—naked in the bed—wraps herself in a bedsheet and walks across the room to him.

MOLLY: You’re gonna catch the flu. So, how are things?

WILL: Got nine days left. We’re workin’ on it. Doin’ stuff.

MOLLY: You don’t want to talk about what you’re doing, do you? [THEY EMBRACE]

WILL: Hotel rooms... illicit romance... We’ve gotta stop meeting like this.

MOLLY: You remember that first time we met? When we were alone together in that room? Even though I’d never seen you before, we were sitting there speaking. And something flickered across your face like a shadow. I said, “What’s that?”

WILL: And then?

MOLLY: Remember what you said?

WILL: [PAUSE] I said, “This is too good to be lived.”

MOLLY: Time is luck, Will. I know the value of every single day.

A close shot of Will and Molly drawn together in a kiss, the sheet now wrapped around them both. The kiss continues to a medium shot, which shows Molly standing as Will is seated on the window sill.

The final showdown between Will and Francis Dollarhyde (Tom Noonan)—now identified as the so-called “Tooth Fairy” killer—is edited differently in both versions. The theatrical version allows the Iron Butterfly song “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida” to end as



Francis Dollarhyde (Tom Noonan) prepares to show Reba (Joan Allen) the wrath of the Red Dragon.

Francis dies of bullet wounds on his kitchen floor. (Curiously, his blood spills beneath his upraised arms like the wings of William Blake's painted Red Dragon which he yearned to become.) Will escorts Reba outside into the midst of various arriving squad cars and embraces her to assure her that all is well. As if still not quite convinced, Reba pulls back from the stranger and asks, "Who are you?" Will replies, "I'm Will—Will Graham." The cable version synchronizes Will and Reba's exit from Dollarhyde's home—a bit too neatly—with the final (artificially re-edited) notes of "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida." While their consoling embrace is retained, Will's declaration of identity is not. No words are ever exchanged between them.

The cable version cuts to a vehicle driving Will to a private home. He rings the bell. Inside the house,

we see the woman (Patricia Charbonneau)—identified in the end credits as "Mrs. Sherman"—whom Dollarhyde had targeted as his next victim, playing with her young daughter in the kitchen. As the doorbell sounds, Mrs. Sherman calls to her husband, who is in another room of the house.

WOMAN: I'll get it, Ralph.

Mrs. Sherman opens the door and gasps. Her husband hears her and comes running, a handgun at the ready. He aims it at the visitor.

MAN: What do you want?

The visitor is Will, an eye blackened and his face badly scarred from where Dollarhyde slashed him with a mirror fragment. It is



Bruised after fighting Dollarhyde, Will Graham pays a visit to the Tooth Fairy's next intended victims.

raining outside, but he doesn't seem to feel the rain.

WILL: I'm Will Graham. I'm with...

MAN: Oh, yeah, yeah... [PUTS GUN AWAY] Oh Jesus, right. Come on in!

WOMAN: Please.

WILL: No, that's alright. You okay?

WOMAN: We're fine.

MAN: We're okay, yeah. We're doin' alright. Listen, that guy Crawford called and he was tellin' me all about what was goin' on and...

WOMAN: Would you like to come in and have a cup of coffee, or a drink?

WILL: [TENSELY] No. Thank you.

MAN: Listen, I want...

WILL: I just stopped by to...

MAN: I want to thank you.

WILL: [AWKWARDLY] I just stopped by to see you. That's all.

Will turns on his heel and walks back into the rain. The shot clicks into slow-motion as he walks away.

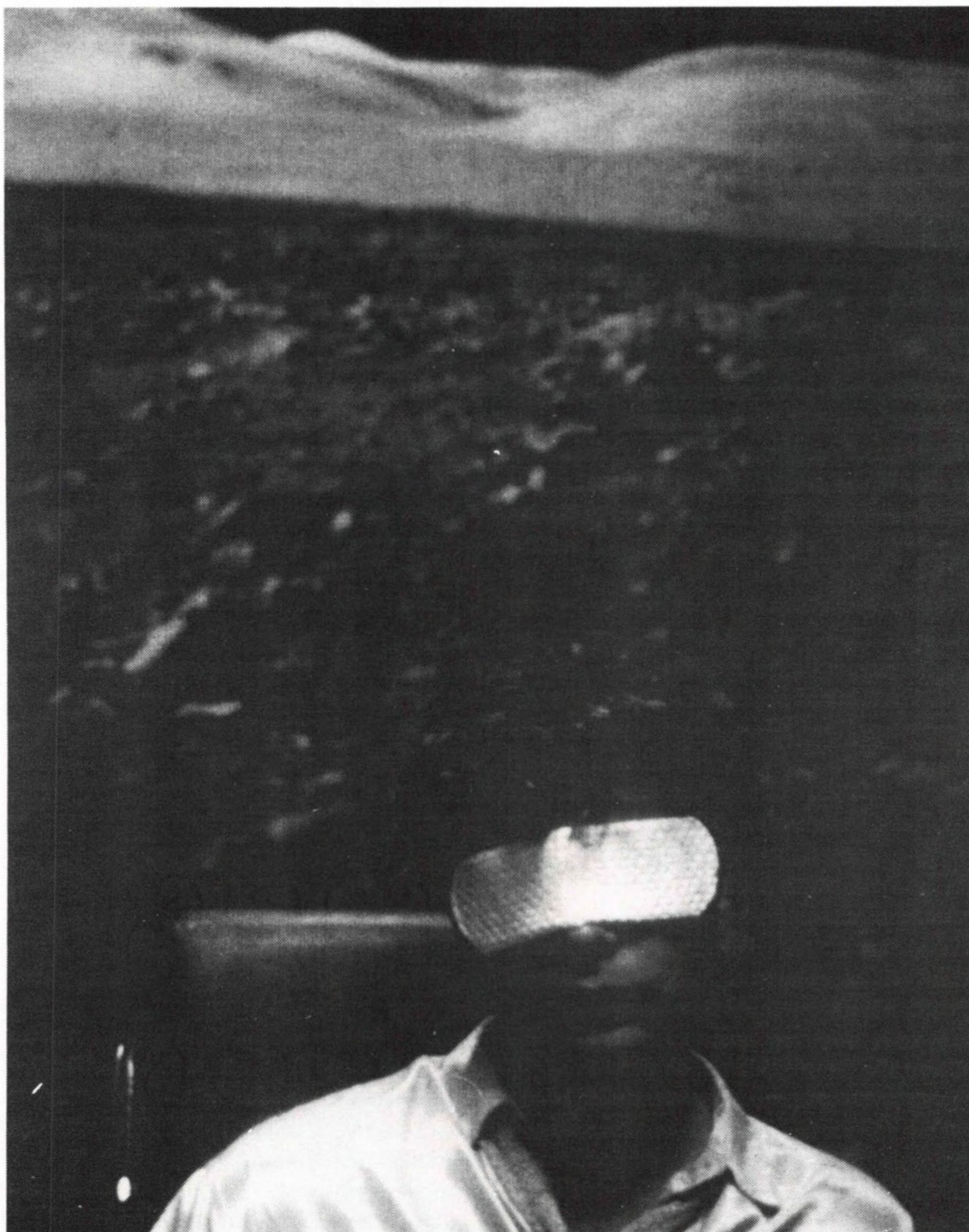
This scene would have been more effective had the coverage been more explanatory. As it stands, the home movie footage of the Shermans (which Dollarhyde studies throughout the film) focuses more on Mrs. Sherman's body than her face, so her identity isn't as evident on first viewing as it should be. The fact that the Shermans are named in the end credits, though they are nowhere called by name, suggests that a fuller explanation may have been scripted, but perhaps not filmed.

Mann's "director's cut"—which runs slightly over its contracted length of two hours (incidentally, the exact running time of Lynch's **BLUE VELVET**)—benefits from the additional scenes with Kim Griest (whose Molly is woefully undersupported in the theatrical version), but its climactic amendments do not seem so well-considered. Perhaps the true value of the cable version, as with the knowledge of various eliminated and unfilmed scenes (described elsewhere in this issue by Paul M. Sammon), is that it allows a glimpse of the **MANHUNTER** that *might have been*—a classic spine-chiller on a par with **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**.



The Unseen **MANHUNTER**

The Slaying of RED DRAGON



Stephen Lang as Freddie Lounds, blindfolded before a Mars-scape in the Olympian lair of the Red Dragon.

By Paul M. Sammon



WITH TWO existing versions of **MANHUNTER** already available to the discriminating viewer, admirers of Michael Mann's pathological police procedural might conclude that there is no good

reason to open yet another investigation into a third variant of this film.

Such, however, is not the case. For a short period of time, a third **MANHUNTER** did indeed exist; unfortunately, it now seems unlikely that this unseen variation will resurface in any form other than that of surviving production stills or script extracts. Or in the memories of those fortunate enough to have seen it.

My own good luck in viewing the unseen **MANHUNTER** stems from simple job placement. Throughout 1986 it was my privilege to be Vice President of Special Promotions for the now defunct DeLaurentiis Entertainment Group. As such, I was privy to the various rewrites, edits and other fine tunings which routinely took place among that company's films.

One of these projects was **MANHUNTER**, and my in-house exposure to this picture included a working familiarity with its various scripts as well as a routine contact with **MANHUNTER**'s production crew. I also had the opportunity to view this film in its rough cut form. The end result of this evolutionary process was the gleaning of a hitherto unpublished fact: namely, that significant pre-release cuts were made to **MANHUNTER** shortly before the film's initial theatrical release.

These edits primarily centered upon the fascinating psychological aberrations of **MANHUNTER**'s two main characters, the psychotic "Tooth Fairy" Francis Dollarhyde (Tom Noonan) and his mentally shaken nemesis, ex-FBI agent Will Graham (William Petersen). However, the end result of these cuts was to *diminish* the aberrations of these key personalities. Had this lost footage survived the editor's flatbed, it surely could have constituted the starting point of yet another restored version of this absorbing thriller, just as surely as it would have deepened audience appreciation for the surprisingly complex characters which Michael Mann had originally written into his film.

In the case of Francis Dollarhyde, the unseen **MANHUNTER** originally contained important instances—both visual and verbal—of the term "Red Dragon," not present in the theatrical and cable prints. In order to fully understand the import of those words, one must first turn to a brief historical examination of the term itself.

RED DRAGON is the title of the source novel on which **MANHUNTER** was based. Author Thomas Harris named his book after poet/artist William Blake's famous painting "The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Rays of the Sun." Michael Mann, in turn, when writing his final draft **MANHUNTER** screenplay (also originally titled **RED DRAGON**), included a description of Blake's painting

on page 99 of the script, deeming it "a pre-psychological evocation of violent sexual impulses."

In fact, Blake's painting makes two cameo appearances in all three versions of the **MANHUNTER** film. "The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Rays of the Sun" can be found at 56m 26s on the theatrical print—in the form of a photographic slide shown by Dollarhyde to abduct tabloid journalist Freddie Lounds (Stephen Lang)—and also at 78m 40s after Dollarhyde's dinner with the blind Reba (Joan Allen), as she joins him in the room where he watches home movies of his next intended victim.¹

Two further references to the term "Red Dragon" also survive in all existing **MANHUNTER** prints. One such reference begins 58m 30s into the theatrical print, when the captive Lounds is forced to read a note saying, in part, "I have seen with wonder and awe the strength of the Red Dragon... You will lie awake in fear of what the Red Dragon will do." The last surviving "Red Dragon" reference appears earlier in the theatrical print, at 50m 32s when FBI agent Jack Crawford (Dennis Fariña) explains the significance of a strange symbol Will Graham has found carved in a tree:

CRAWFORD: I got a call from Asian Studies at Langley. The mark you found on the tree?

GRAHAM: Yeah?

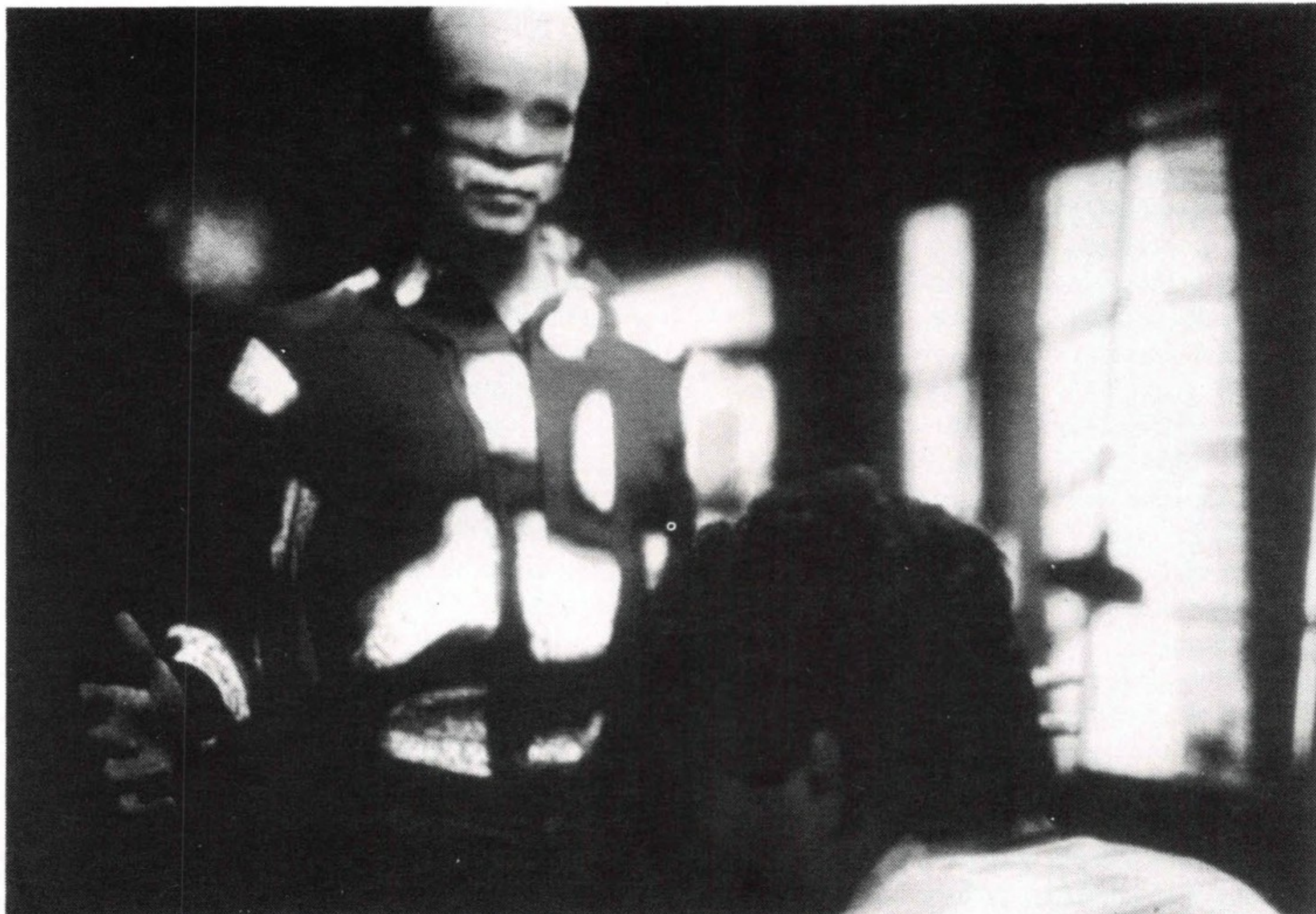
CRAWFORD: It's a Chinese character, considered a lucky sign in gambling. The same character appears on a mah-jongg piece. It means "Red Dragon." Mean anything to you?

GRAHAM: No.

As it now stands, these extant "Red Dragon" references may also mean little to viewers who are either not carefully following **MANHUNTER** dialogue or who are unfamiliar with Thomas Harris' original novel. While the existing versions of **MANHUNTER** suggest Dollarhyde's obsessive fixation on Blake's painting, Harris' novel made it abundantly clear that Dollarhyde's murderous actions were actually a psychotic effort to *merge his personality* with the Red Dragon of Blake's work.

The unseen **MANHUNTER** underlined this fact *via* two shots cut from the release print, deleted segments that further clarified Dollarhyde's delusional quest to become the Red Dragon of Blake's painting.

One such segment was purely verbal, and would have occurred at roughly 101m 50s in the theatrical version. As it now stands, this sequence shows Dollarhyde's kidnapped blind lover Reba (Joan Allen) pleading with Dollarhyde, "Why are you doing this to



MANHUNTER: "Well, here...I...am!" Tom Noonan as Francis Dollarhyde, revealing himself to Lounds.

me?" In the existing prints, Dollarhyde's response is to clamp his hand over Reba's mouth, say nothing and walk away.

However, the unseen **MANHUNTER** inserted a short dialogue exchange between the moment Dollarhyde's palm closes over Reba's mouth and the instant he walks away. In this unedited version, Dollarhyde dropped his hand and stares at the woman for a moment. Then he said the following lines, which can be found on page 120 of Mann's final **RED DRAGON** script:

DOLLARHYDE: Two groups of people were changed. Leeds. And Jacobi. The police think they were murdered. (beat) Do you know what they call the being that came out of the night sky and visited these people? You can say.

REBA: No... I...

DOLLARHYDE: [O.S.] Dragon... Red Dragon. Francis tried to keep me off you, but he was wrong.

This lost exchange indicates that what has been occurring throughout the film is the slow erosion of Dollarhyde's personality, one that has now been completely usurped by the Red Dragon.

However, the most striking component linking the Tooth Fairy to the fabulous beast in Blake's

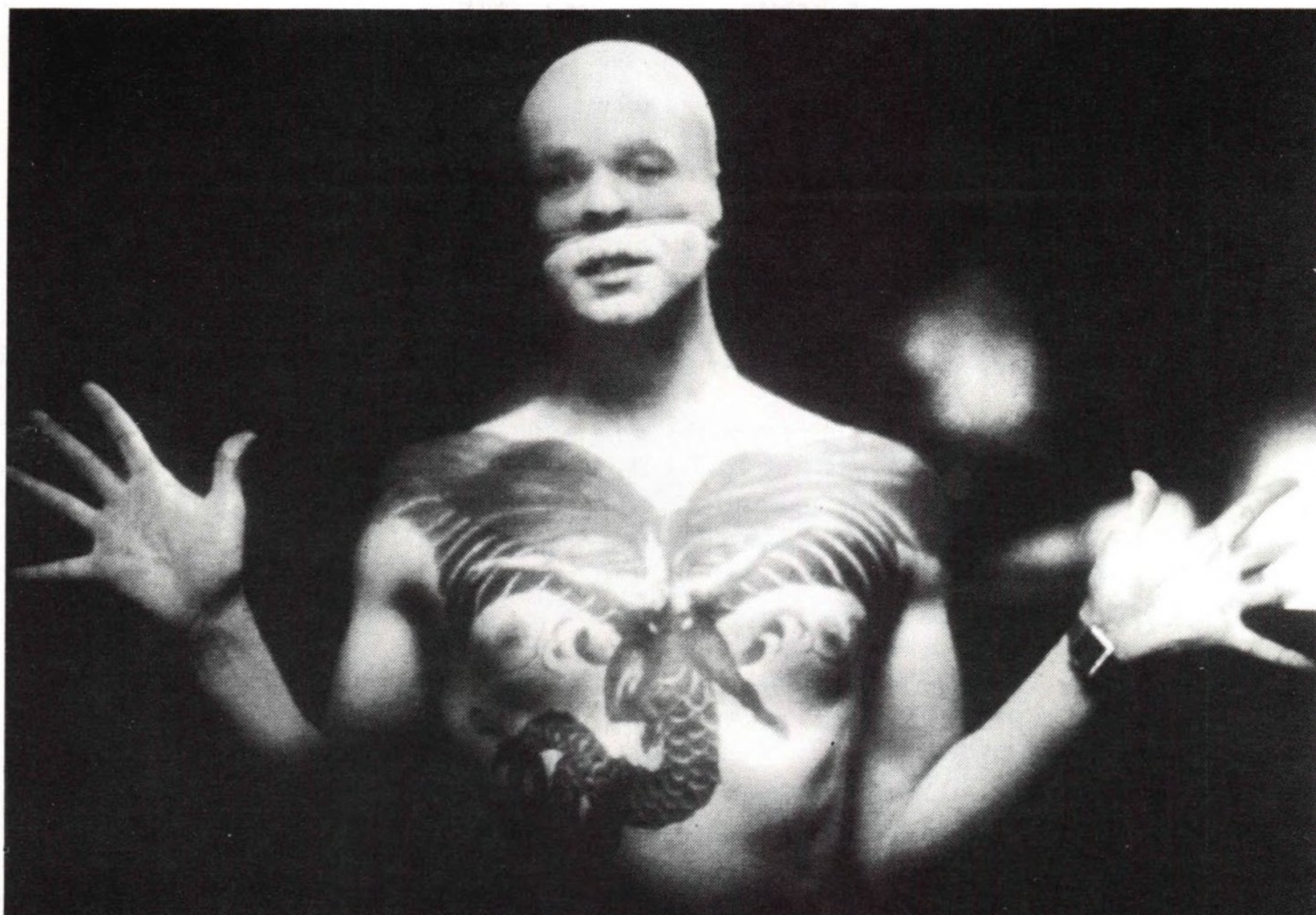
painting was a purely visual one. Yet this important shot was also cut shortly before the film's theatrical release. Intriguingly, the deleted shot is also the only verifiable instance of alternate **MANHUNTER** footage, material shot by Michael Mann to replace the discarded original.

The shot in question would have taken place roughly at 56m 20s in the theatrical print, as the kidnapped Freddie Lounds' takes his first look at his abductor. As this segment now plays in both existing versions, Lounds has been blindfolded, a sanitary napkin taped over his eyes. Hands reach into the frame and rip the napkin away. The fearful Lounds, however, keeps his eyes tightly shut. A threatening voice warns, "If you don't open your eyes, I'll staple your eyelids to your forehead." Lounds opens his eyes and looks up.

What he sees in the theatrical/cable prints is a *tres bizarre* Tooth Fairy, wearing a pantyhose stocking mask pulled down over his eyes as well as a blue-and-white shirt. At this point, Dollarhyde spreads his arms and slowly intones, "Well, here... I... am."

A chilling introduction to the Tooth Fairy, indeed. Yet surviving production stills of this sequence clearly reveal that a far more potent, far *different* image was originally included.

The unseen **MANHUNTER** closely followed the above "unmasking" sequence until that moment when Lounds opens his eyes and gazes upon the



The Unseen MANHUNTER: A shirtless Dollarhyde gives Lounds a glimpse of the Red Dragon.

Tooth Fairy. However, what Lounds witnessed in the pre-release print was a *shirtless* Noonan, his chest and back completely covered with a huge, menacing crimson dragon tattoo. The moment is aptly described on page 108 of Mann's final RED DRAGON script:

LOUDS' POV: THE RED DRAGON

FRANCIS DOLLARHYDE opens and drops a black terri-cloth robe. His 6' 7" body bears a tattoo of William Blake's THE GREAT RED DRAGON—arms extended, hovering, the massive wings become Dollarhyde's arms.

Subsequent actions and dialogue in the unseen **MANHUNTER** were then identical to all existing prints—Dollarhyde still spread his arms, still intoned “Well, here... I... am.” Yet, as the surviving production stills so beautifully attest, this lost tattoo scene would have crystallized Dollarhyde's psychic disintegration through a concrete image mutely testifying to his fascination with—and ultimate subsumption by—the Red Dragon.

Intriguingly, Dollarhyde's dragon tattoo also made a *second* appearance, but only on pages 101-102 of Mann's RED DRAGON script. The tattoo was again to be revealed during Reba and Dollarhyde's lovemaking scene, when the blind woman unwittingly ran her hand across the dragon inked into her lover's chest.

However, all existing **MANHUNTER** prints of this sequence (82m 40s in the theatrical version) clearly show the barechested Dollarhyde lying in bed with no tattoo whatsoever.

I have been unable to verify whether the “barechested” shot in this sequence was also a reshoot; no information regarding this point came up during the film's production process, however, instinct tells me that it was not. Whatever the case, the dropping of the tattoo from this particular point in the film robbed **MANHUNTER** of an ironic visual twist; Dollarhyde's blind lover would have been unaware that she was caressing the most monstrous symbol of the Tooth Fairy's dangerously shattered psyche. In any case, why was the previously discussed tattoo shot filmed and then dropped?

One can only assume that it was a casualty of post-production fallout, for it was during the film's 1986 post-production phase that it was decided to change the film's title from RED DRAGON to **MANHUNTER**. But again, why? Past experience tells me that the DEG marketing department felt the term **MANHUNTER** captured the essence of Mann's film far better than Harris' original title; also, the word “manhunter” itself appears in the film on a tabloid newspaper (at 29m 40s in the theatrical print) as part of a banner headline proclaiming FBI **MANHUNTER** GRAHAM CONSULTS HANNIBAL LEKTOR, THE FIEND WHO TRIED TO KILL HIM.

So perhaps the Tooth Fairy's tattoo simply fell victim to a title change—why include another picture of a red dragon in a film called **MANHUNTER**? Perhaps Mann himself had so tightened his final edit that he felt the inclusion of such a concrete image was now out-of-synch with the more subtle approach **MANHUNTER** eventually took towards indicating Dollarhyde's psychotic identification with Blake's painting.

Whatever the reasons for discarding this tattoo shot, one thing is certain; its disappearance ultimately weakened the symbolic references resonating throughout the scene of Dollarhyde's death. How? After Dollarhyde has been mortally wounded by Graham, we see the dead Tooth Fairy lying flat on his back, arms spread wide, in a circular pool of blood. This image subtly echoed Dollarhyde's earlier pose while revealing his Red Dragon tattoo—an image now missing from the film.

More importantly, however, Dollarhyde's death-pose is patterned after specific details found within Blake's painting. Significantly, the careful arrangement of Dollarhyde's dead body does *not* resemble Blake's dragon—rather, it is the *woman* in Blake's painting who stands before circular images, with her arms flung wide! This contradictory moment, then, our final look at the Tooth Fairy, not only mirrors Dollarhyde's earlier unmasking shot, but also informs us that his long-cherished fantasy—that of mystically merging with all-powerful Red Dragon—has failed. Blake's feminine principle has prevailed.²

Numerous **MANHUNTER** pre-release trims also diluted the character of Will Graham. These subtractions primarily related to Graham's unnerving ability to so mentally empathize with a psychotic mindset, enabling him to track down criminals by literally thinking like them. Unlike Dollarhyde's edited tattoo shot, however, Graham's snipped segments did not rely on visual expression; instead, his deleted moments were entirely verbal.

For instance, when Crawford and Graham first meet on a beach—a dialogue exchange that existed only in the unseen **MANHUNTER**—immediately suggested that there was something...*different* about Will. This dialogue can be found on page 2 of Mann's final RED DRAGON script:

GRAHAM: I wouldn't be of much use to you.

CRAWFORD: Yeah? Last two like this we had, you caught.

GRAHAM: Three years ago. And by doing the same things you and Bowman and the rest of the guys at the lab are doing.

CRAWFORD: Not entirely true, Will. It's the way you think.

GRAHAM: I think there's been a lot of bullshit about the way I think. (beat) I came down here to get away from all that.

CRAWFORD: You look all right now.

GRAHAM: I *am*... all right.

Graham's unspecified ability takes a more ominous turn a few moments later, as Crawford and Molly (Graham's wife, played by Kim Greist) sit alone on a porch (the following dialogue can be found on page 5 of Mann's RED DRAGON script). Molly says, "You're supposed to be his friend, Jack. Why don't you leave him alone?"—two lines which survive in the theatrical print. In the unseen **MANHUNTER**, Crawford replied:

CRAWFORD: Because it's his bad luck to be the best. There's nobody better for looking at evidence.

MOLLY: Yeah. And...?

CRAWFORD: ...and he has the other thing, too. (pause) He doesn't like that part of it...

MOLLY: You wouldn't like it either, if you had it.

The most important excision dealing with Graham's eerie ability—as well as its torturous effect on him and his family—occurred much later, and only in the unseen **MANHUNTER**. This moment corresponded to page 87 of Mann's final RED DRAGON script, where a bit of additional dialogue takes place during a talk between Graham and his son Kevin (David Seaman) in a supermarket. (The edited version of this sequence begins on the theatrical print at 65m 15s.)

Graham has fumblingly tried to explain two painful topics; why his strange mental ability once forced him to seek treatment in a private hospital, and how this action was directly related to Graham's relationship with the supremely dangerous Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lektor (played in **MANHUNTER** by British thespian Brian Cox, whose coolly understated, mocking performance clashes violently with the flamboyant theatrics of Anthony Hopkins' in **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**).

This supermarket scene has mostly survived in **MANHUNTER**'s theatrical print. However, the unseen **MANHUNTER** also included a supremely telling moment following Kevin's naïve query as to how Dr. Lektor feels about his victims:

KEVIN: Did he hate the people he killed?

GRAHAM: No. It's as if the whole world were put here just for him. And he did whatever he wanted to do in it. To any one. At any time... The

victims? (beat) They and their families meant nothing to him. He didn't hate them. They meant... absolutely... nothing... (pause) Those were his feelings I had in my imagination and couldn't get rid of. At the same time, another part of me couldn't stand having his thoughts in my head.

Graham's reply to Kevin's question casts fascinating new shadows onto the multifaceted aberrational conflict warring within Graham's head. Listening to Graham's speech, one abruptly realizes that the manhunter himself felt drawn not only to general thoughts of homicide, but to Lektor's flattened emotional affect—*particularly as that affect pertained to Hannibal's victims*.

The tip-off here is Mann's inclusion of the line "They and their families." This is a particularly revealing (and chilling!) bit of dialogue, for it suggests Lektor's invading influence had extended to Graham's perceptions of his own wife and son. Yet later in this conversation, Will Graham alludes to the fact that he ultimately rejected Lektor's psychic invasion. This may be true. But Graham also tells Kevin that Lektor's psychotic influence was so threatening—and, by inference, contained enough potential for Graham to harm his family—that Graham was ultimately forced to commit himself to a mental hospital in order to deal with it.

Viewers of the theatrical cut looking for similar explications of Graham's conflicted talent must settle for a moment at 29m 8s, as Graham runs from Lektor's cell with Hannibal's uncomfortably acute taunt—"The reason you caught me, Will, is we're just alike"—ringing in his ears. Compared to the unseen **MANHUNTER**'s supermarket scene, though, this moment is far less complicated, conceptually thin. All the more reason to mourn the decision to cut Graham's supermarket speech from **MANHUNTER**'s theatrical print; nowhere else in the surviving versions is the horrific undertow of Graham's unique talent, the dark *yin* to his *yang*, so devastatingly spelled out.

This concludes my catalog of the major edits performed upon the theatrical print of **MANHUNTER**. Yet for all the nit-picking, I can understand why most of this previously unknown material was discarded. The secret lies in understanding classic Hollywood thinking. Mann's **RED DRAGON** script ran to 131 pages and conventional Hollywood wisdom dictates that most films must play at under 120m. Therefore, many trims were probably made simply in the interest of time. Perhaps the edited references to Graham's semi-psychotic condition were jettisoned only to make our protagonist more sympathetic, or to more subtly indicate the demented psychological linkages between the pursuer and the pursued.

The last observation becomes doubly important once one fully appreciates **MANHUNTER**'s tone. This is a film more elliptical than straightforward, more evocative than explicit. Michael Mann probably felt that the inclusion of such overly empathic moments could ultimately disrupt the deceptively quiet progress of **MANHUNTER**'s ominously suggestive flow.

Still, that doesn't stop one from wishing that the editorial scissors hadn't come down quite so hard on Dollarhyde's tattoo, or on Graham's verbal unveiling of his own inner dragon. Six years after **MANHUNTER**'s theatrical release, the recovery and addition of these elements could only deepen our appreciation of one of the most carefully crafted, visually distinct, and psychologically complex thrillers of the 1980s.

NOTES

- ¹ Another implicit reference to the title of Blake's painting appears (at 84m in the theatrical version) in a haunting dialogue exchange between Reba and an obviously smitten Dollarhyde. On the morning after their lovemaking, Dollarhyde wakes abruptly in an empty bed. He finds Reba outside, beside a fence, basking in the rising sun. Dollarhyde expresses his concern and Reba turns toward the house.

REBA: You know, if you show me where things are, I'll make us some coffee.

DOLLARHYDE: No! [LAUGHS NERVOUSLY] D-Don't go back inside the house.

REBA: Why? I left my purse inside...

DOLLARHYDE: I'll get it, it's okay. I-I mean, you should stay outside.
[PAUSE] It's 'cause you look so good in the sun.

REBA: [LAUGHS] Okay.

For the viewer aware of the full title of Blake's painting, the dialogue reveals that Dollarhyde has not only allowed Reba into his heart, but into the painting that rules his fantasy. He now sees her as "The Woman Clothed with the Rays of the Sun," raising her arms in adoration of the Red Dragon.—Ed.

- ² It is also possible that Dollarhyde's death pose was meant to indicate the prevailing of The Tooth Fairy's own feminine [i.e. homosexual] principle, which Dollarhyde violently protests to Lounds and others throughout the picture.—Ed.



FRIEDKIN VS. FRIEDKIN

RAMPAGE Revisited



*Serial killer Charlie Reece (Alex McArthur)
drinks the blood of a murdered priest.*

By Mark Kermode

RAMPAGE

1987, Pioneer PILF-1043 (Japanese Imprint LD),
¥4,841, 118m
1992, Miramax Films, now in theatrical release



DURING THE WINTER of 1986-7, William Friedkin filmed **RAMPAGE**, an adaptation of William P. Wood's novel of the trial of a serial killer. Shot in 36 days for a mere \$7,000,000 on a negative pick-up arrangement with the Dino

DeLaurentiis Entertainment Group, **RAMPAGE** was slated for release in Autumn '87. Yet by August '88, when the unstable DEG finally filed for bankruptcy, **RAMPAGE** remained unseen in the US. Only in Europe, where the film received a limited video release, were audiences able to witness Friedkin's finest work since **SORCERER**.

Now, four years and umpteen "serial killer" movies later, **RAMPAGE** is finally set to hit the US screens, thanks to the efforts of Miramax who have purchased the property for release in August '92. Yet the version of **RAMPAGE** to which US audiences will be witness is substantially different to the acclaimed original version which sneaked out on European video. After months of re-editing and re-sounding the movie, Friedkin has delivered a new cut of **RAMPAGE** which is described by its star Michael Biehn as crucially "less ambiguous" than the original cut.

RAMPAGE centers on the trial of Charles Reece, an amiable serial killer arrested for murdering and drinking the blood of a number of victims, including whole families. Acting as state prosecutor is Anthony Fraser, an idealistic young man who is haunted by the recent death by pneumonia of his young daughter Molly, and who has always stood against the death penalty. Yet at the insistence of the newly appointed D.A. Spencer Wayland (Andy Romano), Fraser agrees to push for capital punishment in Reece's trial, while the defence plead for a verdict of "not guilty by reason of insanity." In a crude but effective manner, Friedkin sets the scene for an energetic debate in which issues of sanity and personal responsibility are dramatically discussed. Can a man who commits atrocious acts be deemed sane? Is it morally right to take the life of a mass-murderer? And what about the victims—when are their voices to be heard? These are the issues which **RAMPAGE** raised in 1987.

In the five years since **RAMPAGE** was first completed, however, William Friedkin's ambitions for the film have changed radically. "Billy wanted to make a very ambivalent movie to start out with," Michael Biehn recently told British journalist Trevor Johnstone, echoing Friedkin's own admission that, since his early days as an idealistic campaigner against the death penalty, he has become far more uncertain about the whole issue. "**RAMPAGE** is about the judicial system and the whole problem of the 'insanity defense'" continues Biehn. "Billy didn't want to make a statement. But he found out that audiences didn't want to come out of the movie saying 'Jesus, was he right? Was he wrong?' They wanted to be told that the judicial system was fucked up! And once they were told that, the movie started to get very good test scores in previews."

Regular VW readers will remember that, only last year, Friedkin announced that he had no inclination to return to and re-edit any of his movies for video or laserdisc release. "With everything I've made, I cut it as I thought was right," he said. "I may often have been wrong, but I don't think there are any outtakes that would affect the movies that I've made in any ways other than to make them longer and therefore harder to sit through."

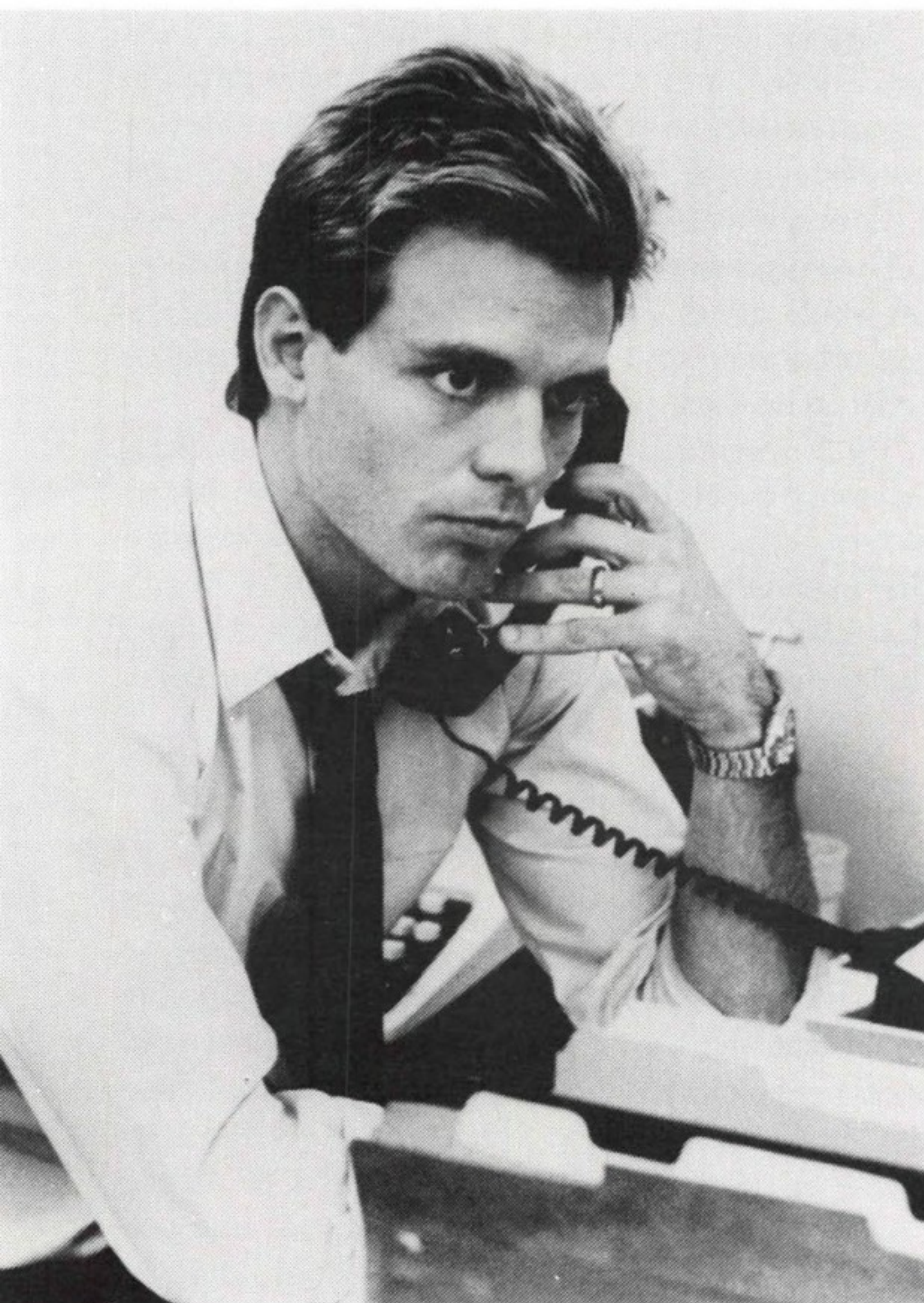
Yet in re-editing **RAMPAGE** into a less ambiguous, more palatable feast, Friedkin has not merely deleted some old scenes, but has also reinstated other scenes which were absent from the 1987 cut. What follows is an account of the significant changes which Friedkin has made to his minor masterpiece.

Opening Shots

Two important differences mark the openings of Friedkin's twin cuts of **RAMPAGE**. **RAMPAGE '87** opens with an astonishing aerial shot sweeping over neatly planted rows of foliage. Through the greenery, the camera picks out the lone figure of Charles Reece (Alex McArthur), walking placidly but purposefully toward an unspecified destination. Cut to Reece upon a smalltown street. He walks toward a house bearing a Christmas wreath upon its door, knocks, and is greeted by a frail old lady. He pushes her inside. The door slams shut.

RAMPAGE '92 opens very differently, with Reece already on the streets of Stockton (the town is here identified by an onscreen title absent from **RAMPAGE '87**). As he walks, a further title is superimposed, boldly declaring "This film is inspired by true events." Former Sacramento District Attorney William Woods' novel did indeed draw inspiration from an actual case, which although unspecified, would appear to be that of the "Sacramento Vampire," Richard Chase. Yet **RAMPAGE '87** makes no such claims about its authenticity, and one should take with a pinch of salt the declaration that the new version is a "true story." Remember, Friedkin has frequently asserted that **THE EXORCIST** is "a true story," a half-truth which author William Peter Blatty has frequently had to correct. One must thus also be skeptical about the film's new closing message, which states that Charles Reece (sic) is due for a parole hearing in six months time.

RAMPAGE '92 now cuts to a scene which Friedkin removed from his original cut, in which Reece walks into a Surplus Store and buys a gun. He is asked by the store assistant whether he has any history of mental illness, and replies jovially "Well, let me see now... No, I don't think so." He is then told to come



Michael Biehn as state prosecutor Anthony Fraser.

back and pick up the gun after a fourteen day "cooling-off period."

"[That scene] seemed to me to be redundant," Friedkin tells Nat Segaloff in his excellent biography *HURRICANE BILLY* (William Morrow, 1990). "So he buys a gun. I edited it, then I took it out. I just kept trying to tighten it up. I never know how much of that can be effective and how much could be harmful." Apparently, since making that uncertain decision, Friedkin has had a change of heart. The scene does indeed serve a useful purpose both to illustrate how easy it is to purchase arms in America, and also to establish premeditation: Reece has had to plan these killings from at least a fortnight in advance. Is this not the act of a 'sane' man? Strangely, although Friedkin here reinforces the "premeditation" theme by reinstating this scene, he later undercuts this same theme by shortening the scene in which Charlie escapes from a prison van. in *RAMPAGE '87*, Charlie amiably asks his guards if he can have a doughnut—briefly unhandcuffed, he stabs both guards with a secreted weapon. In *RAMPAGE '92*, Friedkin has removed Charlie's opening request, and redubbed a

new line in which one of the guards says "O.K. Charlie, dinner time." The effect of this is to lessen the sense of premeditation as Charlie does not ask to be fed, and thus does not encourage the guard to free him.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

The most striking difference between *RAMPAGE '87* and *RAMPAGE '92* is that the former contains a significant subplot concerning the breakup of Anthony Fraser's marriage which has been entirely excised from the new cut. This theme is first introduced in a scene missing from *RAMPAGE '92* wherein Fraser tells his wife Kate (Deborah Van Valkenburg) that he has been chosen to prosecute Reece, and to demand the death penalty. Kate responds with hostility to this news, as it contradicts all the beliefs which she and her husband have long held dear. The following scene takes place in the street outside the central justice office.

KATE: Well, I don't understand why you're even considering it. It goes against everything we both believe in.

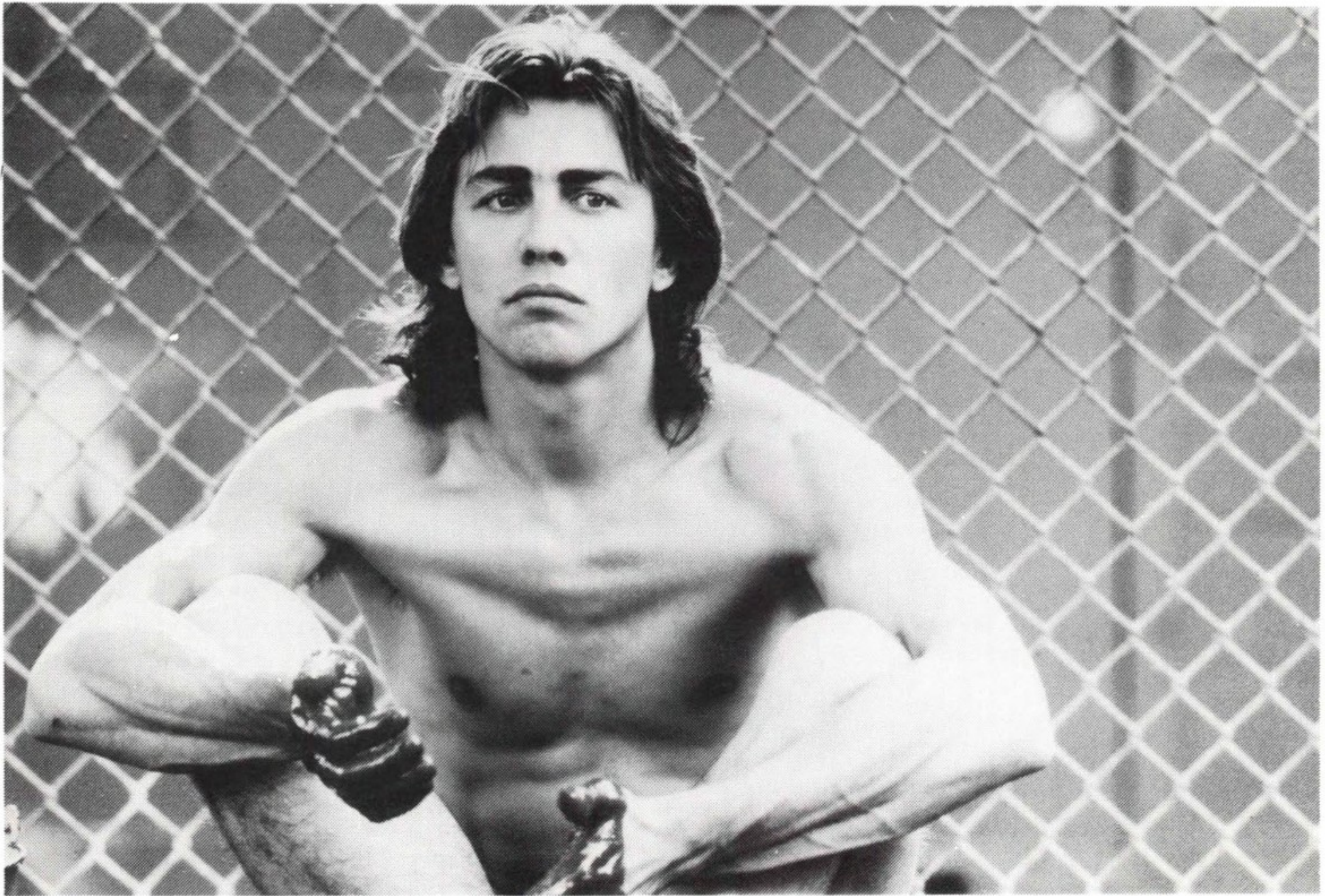
FRASER: I haven't made the decision yet, Kate. I need your help.

KATE: Let them give it to someone else. Why does it have to be you?

FRASER: I'm in charge of major crimes. Wayland wants me to do it. It's not gonna resolve anything to pass the buck to someone else.

KATE: Is it going to resolve anything to take another life? You have a chance and a responsibility to say it's wrong to kill.

Later, in a second scene cut from *RAMPAGE '92*, Fraser sips coffee in a late-night diner while Kate bemoans his inability to make time for their marriage. "I just wonder how we're going to get through the next two weeks," she sighs, adding "or the two weeks after that." Kate's hints that all is not well finally come to a head in a scene in which the incarcerated Reece telephones the Fraser household from prison, and speaks momentarily to Kate, who is shaken by the contact. Although this scene appears in *RAMPAGE '92* (with an additional, demonic laugh by Reece at the end of the call) it is bookended in Friedkin's original cut by two additional and significant exchanges. In *RAMPAGE '87*, the scene opens with Kate saying quietly "Tony, I want to tell you something..." a revelation suddenly interrupted by



Reece seeks to absolve himself from the blood on his hands.

the ringing telephone. This is picked up at the end of the scene in which Kate announces blankly “I’ve made some decisions. I’m going to Salinas [California] for a while. I’m going to stay with my father. After that, I’m not sure.”

In both versions, Kate then disappears from view, although in the new cut—from which the marital breakdown subplot has been removed—her sudden absence may appear to be a result of slack editing. In **RAMPAGE '87**, Kate makes a final appearance after Charlie Reece has been found guilty on all counts, a pyrrhic victory for Fraser. With the bitter taste of success fresh in his mouth, Fraser meets Kate at a boatyard, where she tells him that she can no longer be his wife:

KATE: I’ve been thinking we should make this a permanent separation. I just can’t be with you now.

FRASER: Just hold on...

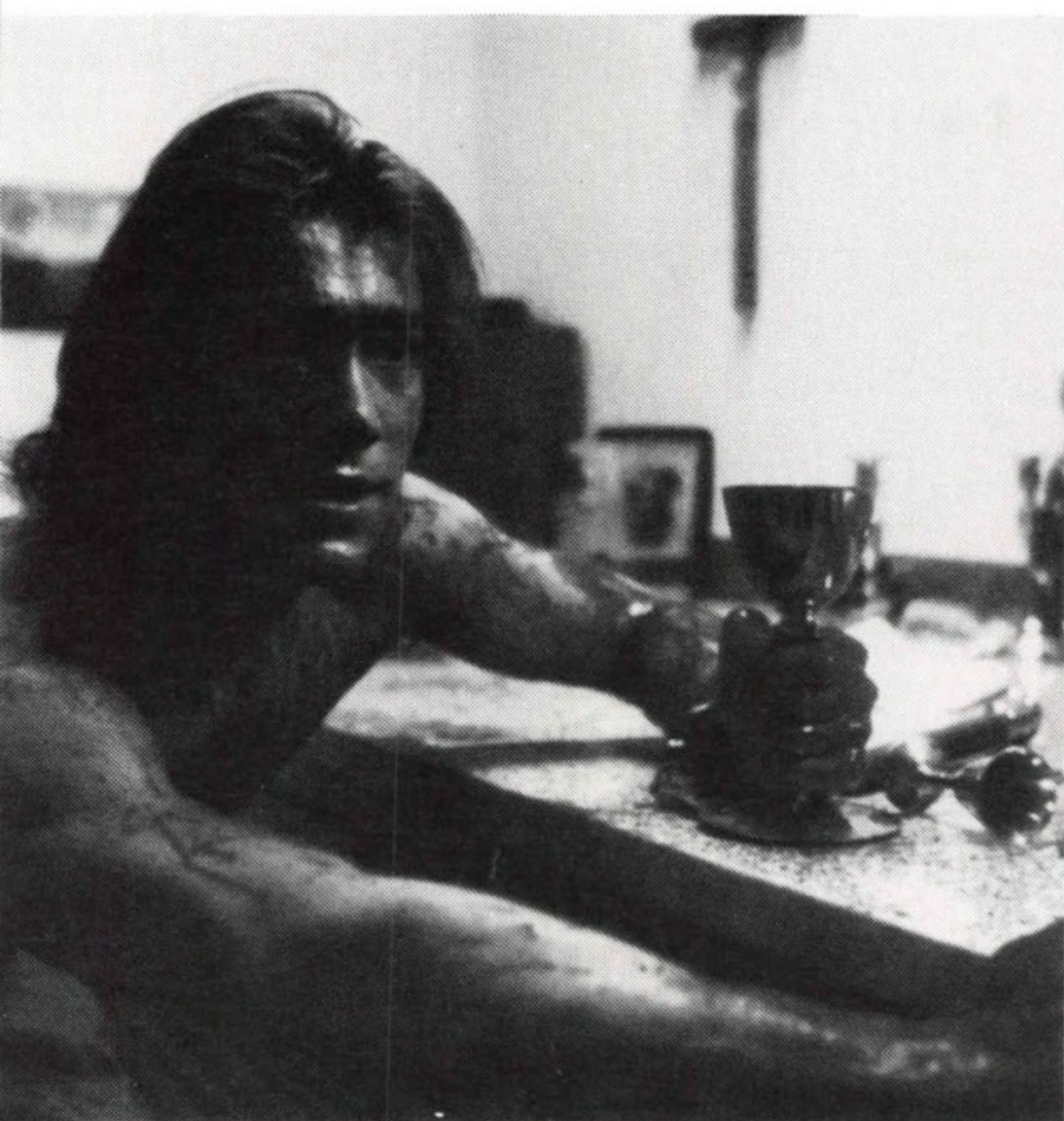
KATE: I really think it’s the best way out for both of us.

FRASER: I love you. I *need* you. Please... I don’t understand, I mean, I *understand* but... please hold on...

KATE: Christ, don’t do this...

According to Nat Segaloff, Friedkin also shot a sequence in which, as a result of his “victory,” Fraser is appointed to the bench, and is reconciled with his wife. Friedkin apparently cut the scene at the advice of composer Ennio Morricone.

It is easy to see why Friedkin chose to remove the marriage breakdown subplot from the newly streamlined **RAMPAGE**, as, on one level, it introduces yet another potentially diverting strain into an already complex debate. Yet its presence in the original served to heighten the confusion which besets Fraser regarding his own ambivalent feelings about the death penalty. Like Friedkin himself, Fraser has moved from a position in which capital punishment was unthinkable to the more disquieting conclusion that in some cases it may be the only reasonable recourse. In moving away from his idealistic past, Fraser loses the love of his wife, just as Friedkin (who began his filmmaking career by saving convict Paul Crump from the electric chair with his startling documentary **THE PEOPLE VERSUS PAUL CRUMP**) may have lost the applause of his more liberal companions. More importantly, in removing this subplot, Friedkin shifts our attention away from Fraser’s personal traumas and back toward the greater, general issues of ‘sanity’ and punishment.



Reece indulges in his obscene communion.

This shift of emphasis is later reinforced by the removal of a long monologue, in which Fraser renounces his new-found support for the death penalty. Whereas **RAMPAGE '87** finds Fraser constantly shifting his allegiances and paying a high personal price for his troubles, **RAMPAGE '92** portrays him merely as a man whose refusal to accept capital punishment gives way to an acknowledgement that in some cases it may be justified. Our sympathies with Fraser are never compromised in this new cut; we are firmly on his side throughout. The uncertainty and ambiguity of **RAMPAGE '87** has been neatly excised.

Suffer Little Children

Just as Fraser's marriage has been cleaned up in **RAMPAGE '92**, so too has the nature of his grief surrounding the death of his daughter, Molly. Much more emphasis is placed in the original cut upon Fraser's feelings of guilt, which arise from him having returned to work before Molly (Chelsea Crank) fully recovered. The following early scene has been excised from **RAMPAGE '92**. It was originally placed after Fraser's first vision of his daughter.

Kate lies in bed, while Fraser sits at the foot of the bed.

FRASER: I saw Molly today.

KATE: I see her too, sometimes. Her little crooked smile.

FRASER: I'm sorry.

KATE: It wasn't your fault.

Fraser reaches out and squeezes Kate's hand.

Both versions also include a scene in which Fraser recounts his own feelings of loss in an attempt to persuade Gene Tippetts (whose wife and child were slaughtered by Reece; played by Royce D. Applegate) to testify in court. Tippetts is convinced that Reece will be deemed insane and wishes simply to run away with his only remaining child. As part of this conversation, **RAMPAGE '87** contains the following words which have been deleted from the new cut:

FRASER: When my daughter lost consciousness, I had to make the decision to let her die [In both versions, Fraser is earlier seen in flashback authorizing the switching off of Molly's life-support system]. I thought it was better for her. I feel the same about Reece. Sometimes life has to be taken. I need you to help me.

Once again, the removal of these exchanges seems to have been effected in order to make Fraser a simpler and unambiguous character. In **RAMPAGE '87** he is beset by guilt—in **RAMPAGE '92**, he is simply haunted by sadness and loss.

Dreams of Madness

Perhaps the most complex changes made by Friedkin are those involving the numerous "dream sequences" with which **RAMPAGE** is filled. Throughout the film, the director has recut these sequences, although the exact reasons for the alterations remain elusive. Suffice to say that Friedkin has in the past proved himself the master of the evocative 'dream sequence' (see **THE EXORCIST**, for example, which contains the most lucid depiction of dreaming yet committed to film) and his exacting desire to get things right in this department is unsurprising. The significant changes follow:

The Dream of Charles and Molly—Following the arrest and charging of Charles Reece, Fraser returns to his darkened home, where he gazes longingly at a

picture of his daughter. In **RAMPAGE '87**, Fraser hallucinates an image of Reece leaning down toward the camera, arms outstretched, which then cuts to an image of the girl running to Kate's open arms. **RAMPAGE '92** substitutes a montage which opens with Reece staring into the camera as Fraser's daughter Molly passes in the background atop a fairground merry-go-round horse (presumably from the same fairground where Gene Tippetts and his son are seen in the film's final moments.) This eerie shot gives way to images of Molly seated upon a river-borne stepping-stone amidst an idyllic park, Reece materializing in the park, Reece bending down to pick Molly from the stone, and Molly's life-support system being turned off (This shot is taken from an earlier dream sequence, present in both versions, in which Fraser remembers his child's death). The montage concludes with a brief image of Reece's dead face, white, pasty and cold. This image is in fact lifted from the original ending of **RAMPAGE '87**, in which Reece is found dead in his cell, having taken an overdose of pills.

The Dream of Charles' Past—Throughout **RAMPAGE**, Charlie Reece is haunted by an image of a door bearing a Christmas wreath slamming shut, the sound of his own childish voice screaming "Daddy!" and the sound of his mother's voice telling him that she will not allow him to see his father, even at Christmas. We learn from an interview with Reece's mother (Grace Zabriskie) that her husband was a violent man, and that Charlie witnessed his aggression against her. Yet Charlie is seemingly haunted by the separation from his father, a separation which he feels most strongly at Christmas.

After escaping from a police van, Reece breaks into a church where he wreaks havoc, smashing the religious icons, killing a priest, and drinking his blood from the communion cup. In **RAMPAGE '87**, Reece is momentarily interrupted in his endeavors by the vision of a door bearing a Christmas wreath slamming shut. (Incidentally, a Christmas wreath also hangs on the door of Reece's first victim's house.) In **RAMPAGE '92** this sequence is replaced by a somewhat clumsy insert of Mrs. Reece's face, followed by a shot of the wreath on the door, with a child's voiceover wailing "Daddy...!"

The Dream of the Kiss—The most baffling alteration is the reinstatement in **RAMPAGE '92** of a dream sequence in which Charlie Reece imagines a pretty court reporter crossing her legs, smiling, and then walking over and kissing his face. Showing us the world from the killer's twisted viewpoint, the scene was excised from **RAMPAGE '87** by Friedkin

because "the whole question about this film is that we don't know what's in his mind." Certainly, the reinstatement of this scene breaks that premise; its presence, while haunting and evocative, is somewhat confusing.¹

Endgames

All of these alterations are significant, but none are more dramatic than those carried out in the closing moments of the most recent cut of **RAMPAGE**; as it now stands, the film boasts an entirely new and startling climax. **RAMPAGE '92** closes ominously with Charlie Reece, having been found guilty of murder, being told by his lawyer; "It isn't over yet. It's only the first part of the trial. We still have a shot at saving your life. We can show the jury that you weren't responsible." (These lines are not present in **RAMPAGE '87**). Sure enough, the defense swiftly arranges for Charlie to have a P.E.T. scan which reveals chemical abnormalities in his brain showing "a picture of madness." On the strength of this new evidence, Charlie is admitted to a State Mental Hospital. At a fairground somewhere in North America (foreseen in Fraser's dream), Gene and Andy Tippetts attempt to put the past behind them as they move toward a new future. But the spectre of Reece lives on. From the confines of his sanatorium, Reece writes a letter to Gene Tippetts, which reads:

"Dear Mr. Tippetts, it is important that you understand why I had to do what I did. I had no hate for your wife, or your little boy, even though your wife was mean to me. I needed their blood to help me do my work. They have now been sent to a better place, away from this violent world. I know there is a place where all little boys can go and have Christmas with their fathers, so none of this will ever happen again.² I want you to know that I told them this and that they understood. If you get this letter, maybe you can visit me here, so we can talk about this further. I know that you are a very kind person and would want to help me. I need your help very much. Yours truly, Charlie Reece."

¹ This sequence is in fact present in the Japanese import version.—Ed.

² The significance of these words is hardly oblique—Charlie is haunted by separation from his own father, particularly at Christmas, the same time of year that he went on his murderous rampage.

These lines are read by Alex McArthur, and imposed over footage of Reece scribbling in his cell, and peering through white-painted jail bars. (Footage of Reece in the sanatorium from which he is meant to be writing was clearly *not* available, and thus Friedkin has made economical use of this previously unseen prison footage.) **RAMPAGE '92** then closes with the following onscreen message:

"Charles Reece has served four years in a state mental facility. He has had one hearing to determine his eligibility for release. His next hearing is due in six months."

As the titles play, Ennio Morricone's haunting score fades away, and a disturbing rumble of jumbled noises (which *may* be the sound of the fairground) howls for what seems an eternity.

RAMPAGE '87 has a very different finale. Following the announcement of the "guilty" verdict, the original cut moves to a bizarre emotional speech in which Reece pleads for mercy. Filmed in a one-shot which tracks back from close-up to wide-angle, the speech is an extraordinary and electrifying episode in which Alex McArthur gradually breaks down and starts to cry:

"I would like to ask the court to give me another chance. If I'm allowed to live, I promise to try to make compensation to the families of the victims. I know that I've done terrible things, and I'm sorry for that. I know that I have to be punished. [He starts to weep.] But if I'm dead I won't be able to make up for those things. I'll try to make up for it. I'll try for the rest of my life. I did those things so that I could survive. If I die now, all I ever did with my life was kill people." [He weeps uncontrollably.]

This moving scene, the only one in which Reece's voice is heard in court, shows us a glimpse of the emotionless killer's frailty. But is it an act? Is Reece merely doing whatever is necessary to avoid going to the electric chair? We have no way of knowing.

RAMPAGE '87 now cuts to the boatyard farewell between Fraser and his wife, and then back to the P.E.T. scan, using the same footage which appears in **RAMPAGE '92**. Following the scan results, however, **RAMPAGE '87** cuts to Fraser in a helicopter dictating a letter, to D.A. Spencer Wayland:

"After I saw the Ellis house and the Tippetts house, I *wanted* to believe that Reece was legally sane. I came to feel that he understood every atrocity that he had committed. I agreed with you that we owed something to the legal system, to the victims. So I set myself up as the avenger of suffering."

As the scene changes to Fraser strolling through the darkened corridors of his office, the voiceover continues; "I can't believe in good conscience that either of us wanted to put Charles Reece to death. I managed to sell it to the jury, to myself. Now I'm not sold. No, delete that... After the P.E.T. scan, I'm just not sold."

Back at Reece's cell, his defense lawyer arrives to tell the prisoner the "good news" about his P.E.T. scan results. But Charlie is dead, having overdosed on tablets secreted in his mattress. As he is found, Fraser's words echo around the cell: "I don't believe execution is the answer. I don't know what the answer is... I don't want to kill this man."

At the prison, suspicion falls upon Mrs. Reece who visited him for an hour before he died. Did she help him take his own life? "But he thought he was butchering people and animals so he could cure his imaginary illness," anguishes Reece's lawyer. "Why would he kill himself?"

With the legal system in turmoil, Fraser's marriage in ruins, and Reece unaccountably demised, his sanity uncertain, **RAMPAGE '87** moves to the travelling circus, and closes with Gene and Andy Tippetts searching for a new future together. The final shot (omitted from **RAMPAGE '92**) is a haunting image of fairground wheels whirring endlessly amidst the darkened sky. Evoking the unfathomable wheels of the mind, this image of the fairground becomes a lonely carnival of madness, spinning inexorably at the heart of the human soul. Only by running away from the court hearings have the Tippetts found redemption. "I've thought a lot about everything that happened," Gene Tippetts tells Fraser in an earlier exchange, also cut from **RAMPAGE '92**. "We didn't go to church, or have any religion. Nothing like that. I think all of this was God's idea... I think God has made a judgment against us." Despite Fraser's insistence that he would issue a court order for Tippetts' arrest if he refused to appear on the witness stand (not present in **RAMPAGE '92**), the father has taken his son and fled. The sound of Kate's voice telling Fraser "You have a chance and a responsibility to say it's wrong to kill," finally hangs heavily in the night air.

Sympathy for the Devil

Just as Charlie's only emotional outburst has been ripped from Friedkin's new cut of **RAMPAGE**, so the figure of this mass-murderer has undergone a subtle transformation. In **RAMPAGE '87**, Charlie was a pathetic individual, a repressed child who had grown into a monstrous man, but who still



*Mrs. Reece (Grace Zabriskie) visits her son in his maximum security cell—a scene not included in any extant version of **RAMPAGE**.*

harbored the fears and terrors of childhood. His final death-pose is described in Friedkin's shooting script as "Christ-like." Our feelings towards Charlie swing between revulsion, sorrow and affection.

In **RAMPAGE '92**, Charlie is irredeemable, a danger, a menace who may one day be released again into the world. In a strikingly significant scene from **RAMPAGE '87** which Friedkin has oddly excised from **RAMPAGE '92**, Fraser tells the jury: "I want you to remember that you sit here as representatives of your community. You represent your neighbors, your friends, your children. If you should decide to let this man go free, be absolutely clear in your mind that you are condemning his victims to a second death, and saying to your neighbors that the life of a terrible murderer is worth more than the lives of the people he killed."

Although these lines are missing from the new cut, their sentiment hangs like a mushroom cloud

over the film. As we gaze in the the blank eyes of Charlie Reece, staring out from behind the bars of his cell, his voice intoning a bizarre invitation to Gene Tippetts, we can only feel dismay at the legal system. As Michael Biehn points out, **RAMPAGE '92** leaves us in no uncertainty that the legal system is "fucked-up," a message driven home by the announcement that "Reece" may soon be released.

RAMPAGE '87 was a much more bitter pill to swallow. In it, we were shown not a fucked-up legal system, but a terminally fucked-up world. Reece's insanity was merely a reflection of the insanity which surrounded him. His death brought no relief, no catharsis. It was Friedkin's grimmest work. As a result, it would probably have failed at the boxoffice. The audiences who rejected **SORCERER** would hardly be ready for such an unforgiving picture of humanity...



LASERDISCS



*Jean Marais and Josette Day at the zenith of platonic love
in Jean Cocteau's glorious **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**.*

THE APPLLEGATES

1989, Media/Image ID8093ME,
D/S/SS, \$29.95, 87m 45s

A family of giant Brazilian Cocorada bugs lose their Amazonian rain forest home to "civilization" and assume human form to secretly reside in the town of Median, Ohio, where they plan to infiltrate and similarly demolish a local nuclear power plant. Director Michael Lehmann (**HEATHERS**)—who co-wrote this film with Red-beard Simmons—delivers a movie which can't decide whether it wants to be a "Conehead"-style comedy, a Cronenbergian insect-fear fable, or an eco-deco cautionary tale. (It delights in squashing the mustard out of a few too many bugs to be taken seriously as an environmental statement.) It works best as a comedy about human frailty, thanks to a skillful cast that includes Ed Begley Jr. (who does another nude-in-public scene, à la "**Son of the Invisible Man**" in **AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON**), Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman as "Aunt Bea." The film's funniest moments deal with the humanizing of the Applegate teenagers, like the metal-head son's roach-smoking problem and the older daughter's transformation from boy-crazy cheerleader to pregnant, man-hating, lesbian biker babe. Lehmann's dialogue doesn't have any of the danger or delight that Daniel Waters brought to **HEATHERS**, but he manages a few infrequent gems which recall that near-masterpiece ("What's Gail going to say when a kid with a shiny black exoskeleton calls her 'Daddy'?"). The special makeup effects, designed by Kevin Yagher, are very successful in their own right, but perhaps too horrific to seem at home in a comedy, however weird.

Filmed in 1989, some months after **HEATHERS**, **THE APPLE-**

GATES waited two years for its direct-to-video release; it is still available from FoxVideo as a rental-priced (\$89.98) cassette. The unmatted, full-frame image on this laserdisc pressing is a trifle soft and the reds (there are a lot of them) are prone to noisy distortion. Image Entertainment has given the film 18 well-chosen chapter stops, and the stereo surround sound is nicely buoyant.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

1946, Voyager/Criterion CC1245L
(CAV), D/MA, \$99.95, 92m

No film has ever captured the enchantment, the astonishment, the romance, or the darker underlying implications of fairy tales so well as *La Belle et le Bête*, Jean Cocteau's decorous adaptation of Madame Leprince de Beaumont's oft-filmed fable. This French classic is so renowned that it scarcely requires our description or approval, and this "Criterion Collection" release presents the film in conspicuously better shape than we've seen till now. The crispness of the transfer exposes some of the textural flaws underlying the film's glittering perfection—the production's postwar reliance on unmatching filmstocks, for example—but Cocteau's timeless victory over these historic limitations only adds to our respect for what he and his crew were able to accomplish. Mild scratches, water marks, and repaired frames are also evident but, compared to Nelson Entertainment's far softer-looking (and unsupplemented) \$19.95 cassette... well, there is no comparison. Our only disappointment is that Voyager was unsuccessful in locating an original French print, which (according to the commentary track) featured a different main title sequence featuring shots of all the primary technicians. The disc contains the familiar subtitled American print,

complete with the opening "Once Upon a Time..." invocation. The CAV grants the viewer a delightful freedom to examine the workings of Cocteau's charmingly naïve special effects, and the digital monoaural soundtrack is excellent.

The multi-audio disc includes a commentary by film historian Arthur Knight, which covers the entirety of production (including extensive quotes from Cocteau's invaluable **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: THE DIARY OF A FILM**, still in print from Dover Books), the visual inspiration gleaned from such artists as Vermeer and Doré, and the individual lives and careers of the film's principal actors and technicians. Happily, despite the diversity of topics, Knight mostly relates his monologue to the scenes presently onscreen, but his commentary is most valuable to those who have not read Cocteau's own production diary. On the pressing we audited, this secondary audio track was also uncomfortably erratic, being either too soft or too loud; the volume level necessary to hear Knight's least distinct words made the majority of them sound positively thunderous.

This fantasy masterpiece was discovered, by most of its contemporary admirers in this country, during its multiple airings on PBS in the early 1970s. In a nostalgic touch that nicely complements Cocteau's "Once upon a time..." Voyager have supplemented their CAV presentation with an episode of **THE CINEMATIC EYE**, a film instruction series (produced by South Carolina Educational Television) which accompanied Cocteau's film during most of those original broadcasts. Hosted by Benjamin Dunlap, an earnest and humbly young-looking professor, the program is perhaps less important for what it says about Cocteau and his films, than for its ability to transport viewers back to a not-so-distant period when Public



Pier Paolo Pasolini as the industrious fresco painter in *THE DECAMERON*.

Television was bombarding audiences with the possibilities of world cinema on a weekly (and sometimes nightly) basis. The film clips contained in the program provide an invaluable index to the superiority of Voyager's transfer over the dark and illegible TV print with which most of us were first acquainted. *THE CINEMATIC EYE* is followed by an English translation of Beaumont's original fable

(87 frames), taken again from Cocteau's film diary, which proves how slightly and expertly it was amended for the screen. The sleeve's center spread is adorned with a French poster for *La Belle et le Bête* and three Cocteau artworks, executed in three different media, while the excellent liner notes have been culled from Francis Steegmuller's definitive *COCTEAU: A BIOGRAPHY* (1980).

THE DECAMERON

1970, *Water Bearer/Image*
ID8508WB,D/LB, \$49.95, 110m 42s

Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Il decameron*—which, with *THE CANTERBURY TALES* and *THE ARABIAN NIGHTS*, forms the director's "Trilogy of Life"—is a selective filming of stories from Giovanni Boccaccio's renowned compendium (c. 1348) of 100 ribald tales about Italian peasant life. Pasolini forsakes Boccaccio's framing device of ten Florentian men and women, eluding the Black Death while telling stories to one another within the walls of a church, transforming the harsh realities of their predicament into an escapist paradise. Pasolini's selection is also limited to eight stories, the majority of which are told in the book by Dioneo, the most lascivious of its narrators. Most of the stories in *THE DECAMERON* are moralistic studies of family relationships—particularly the *deceits* of family relationships—but it concludes with three fantasy-tinged stories which resonate long after the film has ended.

The first of these three fantastic tales is one of Boccaccio's most famous, "The Pot of Basil," which was later adapted as a poem by John Keats. A young woman's unwedded love life is discovered by her three brothers, who take it as an insult to their family. The brothers subsequently invite their sister's lover on an outing, from which he doesn't return. The young man's ghost appears to his lover and tells her where his corpse can be found. The story does not end predictably, with an act of vengeance, but rather on a poetic note that illustrates her coming to terms with this brutal knowledge. In "The Priest and the Mare," a priest who lusts for the young wife of a simple villager convinces the man that he knows a magic spell

capable of transforming a woman into a mare, allowing her to accompany her husband in his travels and assist him in his labors. The final story is a tale of two male friends, one promiscuous and the other reticent, who swear to one another that whomever dies first will return with a description of the afterlife. Again, though the confrontation of ghost and survivor is inevitable, the result is an unexpected celebration of how the dead continue to live through the actions of those who love and survive them.

The first half of the film also contains semi-fantastical elements—a grave robbing, a miracle—but their lack of a unifying presentational structure makes them seem somewhat less than the sum of their parts. The stories achieve solidarity only when Pasolini himself arrives in the film's second half, in the role of a world-class artist contracted to paint a fabulous church fresco. His preparations for work, the erection of his scaffolding, his inspirations for individual panels of the fresco, his selection of colors, the mixing of pigments—we rejoin Pasolini at these key points of creation between the last few stories. The structure gives the film the kind of boon that makes the first, unassisted half of the film compulsively rewatchable. In retrospect, the film's last spoken words (“I ask you, why execute a work when it's so beautiful to dream it?”) suggest that the film's first half is the fluid, shapeless dream that precedes the firmity of achievement.

Photographed in gold and earth tones by Tonino delli Colli (**ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST**) and scored with authentic 14th Century instrumentation by Ennio Morricone (from themes by Pasolini), **THE DECAMERON** is a

captivating evocation of life, magic and superstition in the Middle Ages. Amid the passing parade of curious faces, attentive viewers will find Monique Van Vooren (**ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN**) as the wicker-hatted widow at a funeral wake and, unless we're mistaken, an uncredited Silvana Mangano as the Madonna in Pasolini's dreamed glimpse of Heaven and Hell.

THE DECAMERON was rated “X” upon its domestic release in 1971, and it is refreshing to see a film of artistic consequence released on disc intact, with this rating in full view. The film contains full frontal male nudity, above-the-waist and rear female nudity, and implicit suggestions of oral and anal sex. Despite its erotic and anti-clerical aspects, **THE DECAMERON** is a much milder experience than most R-rated American films of today. The disc is encoded with a dozen untitled chapter stops, of which Chapters 2-11 access each of the eight tales, with the first story presented over two chapters. The fifth story, about a blasphemous rascal who lies his way to Sainthood on his deathbed, is broken into two chapters by an unfortunate and premature side break; the original “*Fine Primo Tempo—Secondo Tempo*” intermission cards appear 1m 30s into Side Two. The print is in excellent condition, succumbing to scratches only occasionally at the point of reel changes, and the image has been accurately letterboxed at 1.66:1. The film is clearly subtitled at the bottom of the image, and the digital presentation of the raucous soundtrack keeps the distortions of overcrowding to a minimum. Also available as a letterboxed cassette from Water Bearer Films, priced at \$79.95.

DEMETRIUS AND THE GLADIATORS

1954, Fox Video 1178-85,
D/S/SS, \$59.98, 101m 3s

Delmer Daves directed this sequel to Henry Koster's film of **THE ROBE** (1953), which had the distinction of being the first film photographed in CinemaScope, 20th Century Fox's 2.35:1 anamorphic process. Following the martyr's death of the converted Christian centurion Marcellus (Richard Burton), the legend of Christ's robe reaches Caligula (Jay Robinson), who is convinced that it is a magic garment capable of raising the dead and bestowing immortality. The freed slave Demetrius (Victor Mature) is arrested after hiding the robe and thrown into gladiator school, where circumstances conspire to slowly strip him of his newfound Christian faith. Far less pious and more entertaining than **THE ROBE**, this continuation—with its focus on the contests of the arena, sultry royalty, stylized villainy, and colorful, supra-realistic art direction—is less a relative to the Biblical fantasies of the 1950s than a precursor of the countless Italian *peplum* films that followed the release of **HERCULES** [*La fatica di Ercole*, “The Labors of Hercules,” 1957]. The cast is particularly good, especially Mature's believably strong yet vulnerable hero, Michael Rennie as the wise Peter, William Marshall as a Nubian gladiator who finds faith, and a blonde Debra Paget as Demetrius' true love. Susan Hayward co-stars as Messalina, but does little more than smoulder and preen through the part. The sleeve's liner notes describe Jay Robinson as “perhaps the screen's definitive Caligula,” but—in one of those peculiar quirks of history and show biz—it's impossible to see his

performance today without imagining that this is how Martin Short might play Caligula. The film sports some ravishing photography by Milton Krasner (**THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN**), and a pleasing Franz Waxman score which reprises Alfred Newman's original themes from **THE ROBE**.

FoxVideo has done a good job of presenting this Technicolor film on disc. The print looks beautiful, despite an unusual number of repaired frame repetitions; at one point (Side 1, 41:21), a tiger leaps at Demetrius and actually *freezes in mid-air!* The ratio is approximately 2:47:1; the compositions (and reel change markings) suggest that the framing would have been more precise with a *slightly* taller and wider presentation. (The fact that the film is letterboxed at all should be counted a triumph, considering that FoxVideo's letterboxed **ROBE** disc could offer only a *squeezed*, full-screen trailer for its sequel.) Though **DEMETRIUS** was released to theaters in stereo, the disc's "stereo surround" is disappointingly centralized and unrecognizable as stereo when audited with headphones. The film has been attentively divided into 12 chapters, and it is followed by two letterboxed (1.85:1) trailers—original and re-release—for **THE ROBE**, though the sleeve mentions only one. The colors vary wildly between the two trailers, and the first one (judging from portions of the Newman score which the two share in common) seems to be time-compressed. Susan Hayward wears the same jewelled gown in photos on the sleeve front and the inner spread, but the latter shot has been printed in reverse, so that her gown's single strap rides a different shoulder in each.

DR. STRANGELOVE, OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB

1964, Voyager/Criterion CC1280L,
(CAV), D, \$99.95, 93m

If you're one of the many cinéphiles patiently awaiting Stanley Kubrick's next production, look no further: Kubrick himself supervised the transfer and designed the sleeve for this "Criterion Collection" release of his comic adaptation of Peter George's straightforward novel **RED ALERT**. The film, as you probably know, documents a series of meetings and negotiations between American and Russian soldiers and officials in the wake of a nuclear attack, launched against the Soviet Union by deranged Air Force General Jack D. Ripper (Sterling Hayden), who is convinced that tap water, fluoridated by the Communists, is responsible for his sexual impotence. This classic *comédie noir* remains one of Kubrick's greatest films, and it is given honorable treatment in this sharp-looking, two-disc set.

The standout item of Side 4's supplementary section is Kubrick's own first draft of the screenplay (written before Terry Southern was hired to finesse it), which offers some intriguing surprises to the serious Kubrick observer. His script—dated August 31, 1962—contains a number of surprises, not only in terms of its relationship to what was ultimately filmed, but also in relation to Kubrick's subsequent work. While **DR. STRANGELOVE** is primarily a (then) contemporary satire and only marginal science fiction, the script shows the director already preoccupied with the genre he would virtually recreate with **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY** (1968). The

script introduces itself as a "Macro-Galaxy-Meteor Picture," with a furry, hydra-headed mutant roaring in place of the more-familiar MGM lion. The story of the end of earthly civilization, reconstructed from pages found "in a deep crevice of the Great Northern Desert by our Earth probe, Nimbus II," is wryly narrated by an alien being named "Nardac Blefescu." (The name is derived from Swift's **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS**; the first word being the highest honor of the Lilliputians, and the second being the country of their neighboring enemies.) **2001**'s strict concerns with technical verisimilitude are also foreshadowed by this prefatory note: "The flying sequences will especially be presented in as vivid a manner as possible. Exciting backgrounds and special effects will be obtained."

If one credits Peter George's contribution to the script as the carry-overs from **RED ALERT**, this draft also helps the viewer to deduce what Terry Southern brought to the finished film. Most of the film's most memorable lines ("Gentlemen! You can't fight in here—this is the War Room!") are not present in Kubrick's version, nor are General Ripper's allusions to impotence and "our precious bodily fluids." On the other hand, Kubrick was responsible for the film's use of comic names. (It is possible that he had been somehow exposed, in the wake of **LOLITA**'s success, to Vladimir Nabokov's 1938 play **THE WALTZ INVENTION**, a "doomsday machine" scenario full of decorated Generals with names like Plump, Gump, Mump, Hump, and Dump. The play was not published in

A rare glimpse of Stanley Kubrick directing Peter Sellers in DR. STRANGELOVE.



English until 1965, the year after **DR. STRANGELOVE**'s release, so it seems likely that the two colleagues either discussed the play during or after **LOLITA**, or perhaps that Kubrick's film influenced the particulars of Nabokov's translation.) In this early draft, "Turgidson" is the name of a senior Presidential aide, while the character known by that name in the film is called General "Buck" Schmuck—a rather too-obvious joke which Kubrick tries to excuse by noting that "the name 'Schmuck' appears on Page 1431 of the 1961-62 Manhattan Telephone Directory." The name of Col. "Bat" Guano (Keenan Wynn) appears, without explanation or correction, as *Rudley* on Frame 25968. Curiously, a good deal of Ripper's original dialogue was given to Turgidson by Southern, and it's surprising how much of the dialogue from this early draft appears intact in the completed work. Kubrick's draft also specifically describes Lt. Lothar Zogg (played in the film by James Earl Jones) as a *Negro* soldier to set-up a dramatic examination of the racist parallels to Cold War paranoia, but this thematic echo was written-out when the climax of the flight was changed from a kamikaze delivery to the ultimate rodeo ride. The script pages (586 still frames) are imaginatively presented, with a few clever animation and special effects passages included in "Play" mode for added spice, and brief passages from the film itself for comparative purposes.

Eleven supplementary chapters are devoted to Maria Palozzola Groumbos' informative and anecdotal story of how **DR. STRANGELOVE** was transferred from film to disc (Kubrick's print was actually seized in 1989 by US Customs who, despite the film's fame,

judged from the title that it was pornographic); a 3m original British trailer, featuring Kubrick's likeness; before-and-after photographs of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Bikini Islands of Operation Crossbow; American Civil Defense shorts, excerpts, and artifacts from the 1950s; and, perfectly in tune with the film itself, a music video of George McKelvey's satiric doo-wop song "My Teenage Fallout Queen" (1964). The bonuses may be exhausting to pour through in one sitting but, especially where younger viewers are concerned, the Civil Defense materials in particular restore this timeless comedy to its original era and emotional climate. The audience that merely laughs at this film isn't really seeing it, nor are they empowered to affect or enforce an aversion from the nightmarish course it describes.

The film itself is thoroughly encoded with 22 chapters, and the transfer—made from Kubrick's own personal print—is super-crisp, with just enough faint scratching at unintrusive points to remind the viewer that this is a *print*, not an internegative. Though the film was originally exhibited at 1.85:1, the entire frame has been revealed at Kubrick's request, so that the screen ratio vacillates without rhyme or reason between 1.33:1 and 1.66:1 (actually closer to 1.45:1, with very slight mattes—à la **CLOCKWORK ORANGE**—and soft edges). This not only allows Ken Adam's visionary War Room set to be more fully appreciated, but the taller frame also exposes Gil Taylor's naked lighting schemes inside the cramped quarters of Major Kong (Slim Pickens)'s B-52, as well as a fair amount of lens smudging (not to mention the matte glare visible during the B-52 exteriors in Chapter 20, Frames

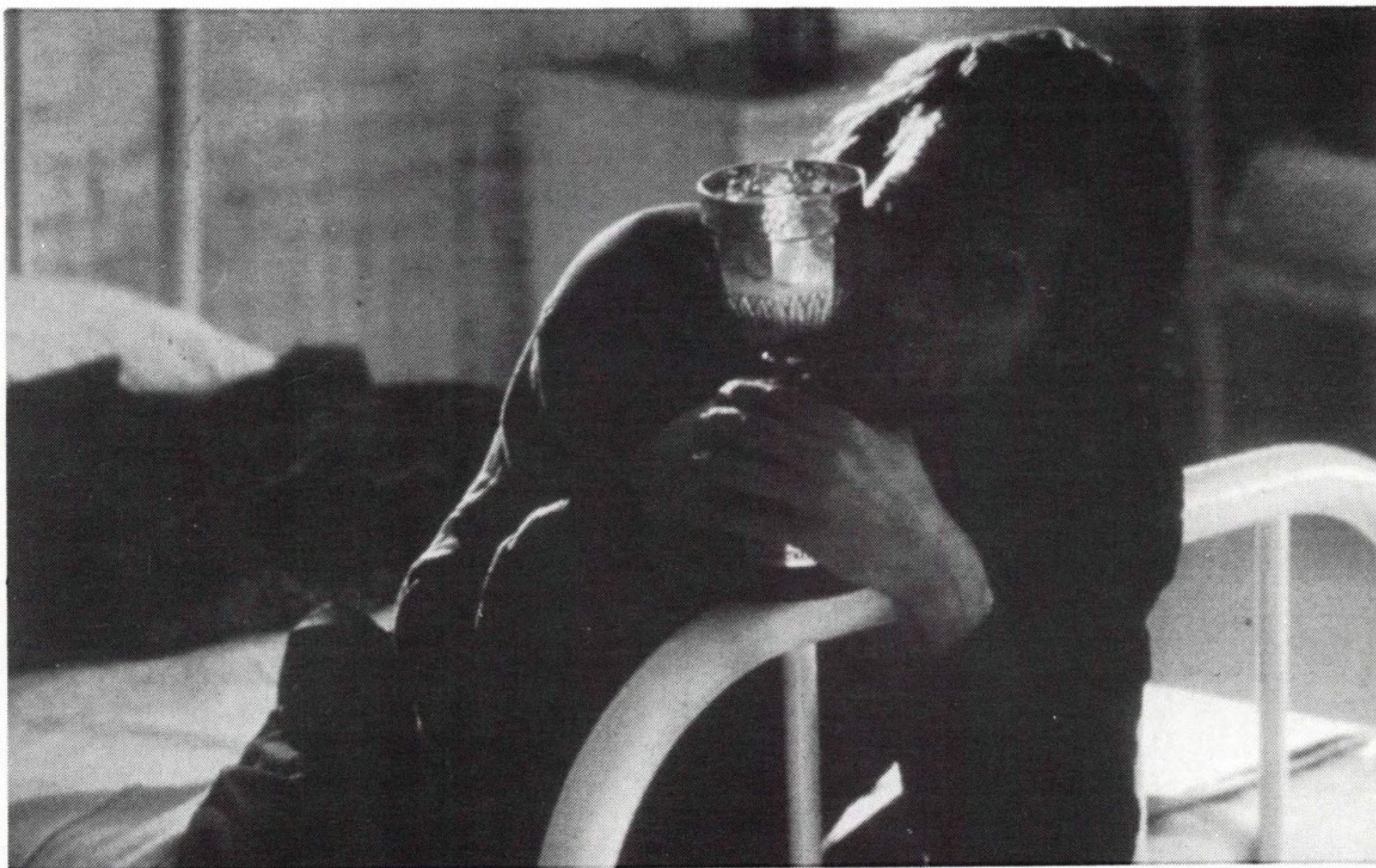
5697-5858). Another interesting aspect of the disc's ratio is the fact that the bomb which Kong rides to Target Zero is revealed as a travelling matte, which comes from below and actually *vaults* over the matte line into frame!

The only possible complaint about this set is that the side breaks have a tendency to occur after a particularly funny line, depriving the viewer of the continuity of reaction shots. It's disruptive, but hardly destructive. The digital monaural soundtrack sounds like it was recorded yesterday.

THE FISHER KING

1991, Voyager/Criterion CC1288L, D/S/SS/CC/MA, \$99.95, 137m (1-2/CLV, 3-4/CAV)

This marvelous and touching film was the result of director Terry Gilliam's decision (after his exquisite but commercially disastrous **THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN**, 1989) to try his hand at "a selfless act"—which also happens to be the theme of Richard La Gravenese's original screenplay. Jeff Bridges plays Jack Lucas, a NYC shock-talk radio host—isolated by celebrity and on the threshold of greater success—who unwittingly inspires a bitter listener to open fire on a restaurant full of people, then himself. Years later, after his self-loathing has cast him below the bottom rung of Ambition's ladder, Jack meets Parry (as in "Thrust and...", feelingly played by Robin Williams), a vagrant with medieval delusions of abducting a false Holy Grail and winning the hand of a brash and painfully clumsy maiden (Amanda Plummer). When Jack discovers that Parry's fantasies are in fact the result of surviving the massacre he inspired, in which Parry's own wife was violently killed, he



Jeff Bridges (holding a poor man's Holy Grail) gives one of his richest performances in Terry Gilliam's *THE FISHER KING*.

devotes himself to helping this shattered soul recover his lost happiness. His mission isn't successful until he stops trying to help Parry to absolve his own sense of guilt. Michael Jeter all but steals the film as a wretched, gay streetperson who befriends Bridges and brings Plummer and Williams together with a singing telegram to end all singing telegrams.

THE FISHER KING is also readily available on cassette and regularly-priced laserdisc from Columbia/TriStar Home Video but, if you can possibly afford it, this two-disc "Criterion Collection" package really does reward the extra investment. The Super 35mm film is presented in its original 1.85:1 aspect ratio, with superlative stereo surround sound, in a transfer supervised by Gilliam himself. The second disc, which contains the last third of the movie and more than a full side of supplementary selections, is in CAV. The

film is encoded with 38 chapters, and the excellent liner notes by Michael Wilmington brace the viewer for something special.

Throughout the film, the second analog channel contains a running commentary by Gilliam, which—by addressing the production on every level, from script to performance, from on-set tensions to post-production looping, from symbolism to gossip—becomes nothing less than the definitive appreciation of the film at hand. We admired the film on first viewing, but felt much more affection for it after riding shotgun with Gilliam's jaunty and enriching assessments. (We especially liked the attention he draws to the female aspects of Lesley Walker's editing, and his noting that the building used for the film's asylum was formerly used for walnut storage—another sort of "nut house.") In a tour lasting well over two hours, Gilliam is never at a loss

for words, and his observations are never less than rousing good company. On this level alone, **THE FISHER KING** rates as one of the most engaging Criterion titles ever.

Also included are three theatrical trailers, which seem cold in their calculated grabs for demographics after such a warm and sincere movie; seven insubstantially short excised sequences (the best is Plummer joyously thrashing around her apartment to an Ethel Merman record); a script-to-storyboard-to-screen analysis of several key sequences; and, lastly, a series of costume tests featuring the four principals. These bonuses have a behind-the-scenes orientation, but none of the self-important smugness one finds in most studio-backed "Making Of" featurettes. Everything provided on this disc is present for the sole purpose of sending the viewer back, with wider eyes, to the finished work. It's a joy.

THE FURY

1978, FoxVideo 1097-80, D,
\$34.98, 117m 46s

Based on a novel by John Farris (who also scripted), this film was Brian De Palma's stylish but redundant follow-up to his first commercial success, **CARRIE** (1976). Kirk Douglas plays a father fighting to regain custody of his telekinetically gifted son (Andrew Stevens) from a malevolent guardian (John Cassavetes), whose quest becomes linked with that of a young woman of similar but more volatile talents (Amy Irving), who believes that only Stevens can teach her to marshall her powers. De Palma delivers some spectacular set pieces—Irving's accidental touch of bad guy Charles Durning (which projects into her mind a panoramic playback of his past evils), Stevens' jealous obliteration of an indoor amusement ride, and Cassavetes' literal explosion (the obvious seed of **SCANNERS**)—but they are couched in a plotline that is at once overplotted and underthought. More than a couple of heroic characters occupy center stage for long stretches of time, as do a number of villainous types, which diffuses the film's dramatic focus past the point of recovery. The worst of the script's miscalculations is a lack of foreground attention to Stevens' pivotal character, who is kept at hearsay length until we become acquainted with a badly brain-poisoned youth minutes before his death from a fall—seconds after he has demonstrated the ability to levitate! These faults are elevated to a level of passable numbskull entertainment with the help of earnest performances, Richard H. Kline's flamboyant photography, and a vigorous John Williams score. The film's best acting comes from William Finley,

who briefly appears as a gone-to-seed psychic on Irving's trail. Finley had a knack, in so many films—**SISTERS**, **EATEN ALIVE**, **THE FUNHOUSE**—for working “nothing parts” into intense displays worthy of better pictures. What a shame that he disappeared from the business.

The film has been given an attractive, if slightly soft transfer with bold, accurate color and a punchy, digital mono soundtrack. The image is cropped to 1.33:1 from 1.85:1; the loss is occasionally noticeable, as when the details of Cassavetes' exploded body (designed by Rick Baker) are not as evident as they should be, particularly the somersaulting head at screen left in the final shot. Sixteen chapter stops have been generously provided—the first devoted to opening logos—and the sleeve features an extensive (and frankly misplaced) tribute to John Cassavetes. Perhaps if **SHADOWS** or **FACES** or **HUSBANDS** or **LOVE STREAMS** were available on disc, the public wouldn't have to remember him for roles like this, well-acted though they are, which he accepted only to finance the films he wanted to direct.

LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WOMAN

1948, Voyager/Criterion, CC1293L,
D, \$49.95, 86m 56s

Max Ophuls' first American feature, based on a novel by Stefan Zweig, is not literally a fantastic film, but rather a stylized romantic tragedy about two turn-of-the-century Viennese whose emotions seem to dwell *outside* reality—a young woman (Joan Fontaine) who worships from afar a concert pianist and his music, and the musician himself (Louis Jourdan), whose obsessive search for a

Goddess to serve as his Muse leads him to womanizing and, ultimately, to the betrayal of his talent. According to the informative and gracefully written liner notes of Charles Dennis, Ophuls' film was given only a cursory release by Universal-International (they even misspelled the director's name as “Opuls” on the film itself!), and its downbeat story of supernatural love doomed to human failure was not embraced by post-war critics and audiences. Ophuls would direct only two more American films before returning to Europe for his self-destructive triumph, **LOLA MONTES** (1955), which was completed two years before his death. This “Criterion Collection” disc may be counted, then, as the ultimate triumph of quality over popularity; **LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WOMAN** fits the laser format as if born to it, with an astonishing side break, superb picture and sound quality, 26 ideal chapter breaks, and packaging with the rare ability to encapsulate and summon back the entire range of emotions contained by this baroque masterpiece. The only apparent flaw is the sleeve's listing of an 89m running time.

LOVE MEETINGS

1964, Water Bearer/Image
ID8511WB, D/LB, \$49.95, 92m

Pier Paolo Pasolini's **Comizi d'Amore** is a B&W, no-frills, “man in the street”-style documentary about Italian attitudes and superstitions about human sexuality, filmed between August and November of 1963. Between these commentaries, Pasolini intercuts excerpts from interviews conducted

Patrick Troughton's haunted eyes figure prominently in this unique art campaign for THE OMEN.



with novelist Alberto Moravia (*THE CONFORMIST*) and psychologist Cesare Musatti outside his own villa, where Elvis Presley's "I'm Counting on You" can be heard playing over and over on a record player. When Pasolini questions students, sunbathers, and unemployed laborers about sex, infidelity, and divorce, their comments have a disturbing tendency toward intolerance of other people's natures; a few of the remarks were later withdrawn from the film by the angry and ignorant souls who spoke them, and these are presented with a "Self-Censored" stamp of retraction. Moravia, disgusted that his countrymen aren't more progressive, discusses their sexual morés with overwhelmed gestures more appropriate to predicting some impending apocalypse, but he offers the film's most memorable observation: "Men of real religious sense are never

shocked. Christ was never shocked. The *Pharisees* were shocked." The film itself is presented in thirteen segments which address specific questions and themes, and the disc appropriately places its chapter codes at the start of each segment. The sleeve promises a 1.66:1 presentation, but the disc's ratio is actually closer to 1.35:1. The Italian-language film features "Easy Read" yellow English subtitles. Also available on cassette from Water Bearer Films, priced at \$69.95.

THE OMEN

1976, FoxVideo 1071-85,
D/S/CC/LB, \$49.98, 111m 49s

This overrated item—the most commercially successful of the countless quasi-Biblical horror films which surfaced in the wake of *THE EXORCIST*—opens in a Roman maternity ward, where an American diplomat (Gregory Peck) is informed of his newborn son's death and, to spare his wife this heartbreak, agrees to a priest's

covert offer to substitute his dead son with another newborn, whose mother died in childbirth. Five years later, after the diplomat has been named US Ambassador to Great Britain, he begins to receive intimations (and demonstrations) that his "son" is in fact the Son of Satan promised by the Book of Revelations. Written by David Seltzer (who later admitted that he "did it strictly for the money"), the film is built around a number of elaborate, violent set pieces—hanging, bisection by lightning rod, a decapitation—that recall Dario Argento's films, though staged with far less flourish by director Richard Donner; one of its few subtle horrific images, of a priest's room wallpapered with thousands of pages from the Bible, recalls the prayers painted over a priest's body in the "Hoichi the Earless" segment of *KWAIDAN* (1964). Jerry Goldsmith's ambitious, haughtily ominous, "Black Mass" score won an Academy Award, and two undistinguished sequels followed: *DAMIEN—OMEN II* (1978) and *THE FINAL CONFLICT* (1981).

The film was photographed by Gil Taylor (**DR. STRANGELOVE, REPULSION**), whose penchant for incorporating source lighting is parlayed here, toward the end, into trickery that allows background lights to form natural crucifix patterns. FoxVideo's "Special Wide Screen Edition" disc accurately letterboxes the Panavision frame at 2.35:1, but the image quality itself is erratic to say the least. There is a tendency to graininess and pallid color, and the blacks onscreen seldom match the truer blacks of the matings. The digital monaural soundtrack has noticeably less presence than we remember from the film's theatrical exhibition. The film is encoded with 21 chapters, and features an intriguing side break. The sleeve lists a running time of 110m.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

1962, FoxVideo 1746-85,
D/LB/CC, \$69.98, 154m

Robert Aldrich directed this pleasingly garish Biblical epic in Italy, during the years when he worked in Europe to escape the contractual clutches of Columbia's Harry Cohn. In spite of Aldrich's command and its British male leads (Stewart Granger and Stanley Baker), this film is far more allied with the Italian *peplum* cycle—a genre at its height of production in 1961, when **S&G** was filmed—than with the epic cycle which reached its apotheosis with **BEN-HUR** (1959; a far more resolutely American film lensed in Rome) and burned out with **CLEOPATRA** (1963). The story is an immense elaboration on the Book of Genesis tale: the Hebrew tribe of Lot (Granger), en route to the promised land of Canaan, is admitted to the decadent twin cities of the title,

ruled by incestuous siblings Queen Bera (Anouk Aimée) and Astaroth (Baker). Once inside, the tribe succumb to the sinful ways of their surroundings until a series of deaths and miracles point their way out. Of course, the film ends with the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. The battle sequences were reportedly directed by Sergio Leone, and such Italian "golden age" luminaries as Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Scilla Gabel, and Rossana Podestá are featured in the supporting cast. The two-disc set is supplied with an informative article about Aldrich's exodus years (by David Mermelstein) in the center spread, and some additional paragraphs on the back sleeve helpfully relate the inconsistencies between the film's story and its Biblical telling. One regrets that Aldrich's film hasn't been restored here to its original, scandalous 171m cut, but it's a treat to see its vigorous performances and images restored to an approximation (1.75:1) of their original ratio. The four-sided program is thoroughly encoded with 29 chapters.

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE

1946, FoxVideo 8030-80,
D, \$39.98, 83m 44s

From the first moments of this Robert Siodmak suspense classic, it's obvious that we're in the hands of an absolute master. As a silent film called "THE KISS" unreels in a hotel parlor to a rapt turn-of-the-century audience, the camera levitates to an upstairs room where a lame woman is watched while undressing by a maniacal eye secreted in her closet. As she raises her arms to slip a nightgown over her head, we see her hands suddenly contort with unimaginable, choreographed pain. Based on

Ethel Lina White's novel **SOME MUST WATCH**, this is a stormy-night-in-the-old-dark-house thriller—reminiscent of Roland West's **THE BAT** and Paul Leni's **THE CAT AND THE CANARY**. The story attends the lurkings of a serial killer who murders afflicted women, centering on the mute housekeeper (Dorothy McGuire) whom everyone assumes will be next on his hit list. Ethel Barrymore, George Brent, Elsa Lanchester, Rhonda Fleming, and Rhys Williams—not to mention Carlton the bulldog—also figure prominently in this splendidly-cast production.

This Selznick release was produced for RKO in 1945, and it features many of the same technicians who brought their talents to bear on Val Lewton's RKO horror classics—cinematographer Nicholas Musuraca, art director Albert D'Agostino, special effects man Vernon L. Walker, composer Roy Webb and, in front of the camera, actors Kent Taylor and James Bell. Born in Tennessee and raised in Germany, where he made his first films, the expatriate Siodmak made this film between his first atmospheric successes for Universal (**SON OF DRACULA**, **PHANTOM LADY**) and his classic *films noir* (**THE KILLERS**, **CRISS CROSS**), and he poises it skillfully between the genres of mystery and psychological terror. One can't proclaim this to be the first "serial killer" film, it may well be the first to dare the presentation of a killer's *point-of-view*, as the camera soars through his glowering pupil to share with us his sick, distorted fantasies of marred beauty and women who

Rhonda Fleming, George Brent, and a strange pair of twins figure in Dorothy McGuire's wedding dream sequence in the masterful THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE.





have no mouths but must scream. Also included are a few memorable cutaway shots of black-gloved hands, filmed with chilling alacrity, whose impact elevated such shots to a cliché for all subsequent murder mystery and *giallo* films.

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE may be short at only 83m, but it deserves more than the nine, uncaringly-named chapters ("Dr. Parry Steps In," "Beginning of Side Two," etc.) which FoxVideo has given it. The visual presentation, however, is faultless. Musuraca's photography is impeccably well-defined throughout, particularly during the CAV climax on Side Two, and one leaves the film not least impressed with the evocative set decorations of Darrell Silvera—the gaslights, the foiled wallpaper, the beautiful antiques that dress literally every scene. Only one question plagues me: Why, considering the film's theme, wasn't this disc *closed-captioned*? Not presently available on cassette, this version should not be confused with Peter Collinson's lackluster 1975 remake, which is.

THE TIME MACHINE

1960, MGM/UA ML102566,
D/S/LB, \$34.98, 102m 27s

With the possible exception of his "Puppetoons," that singular contribution to the art of three-dimensional animation, George Pal's **THE TIME MACHINE**—based on H.G. Wells' first novel (1895)—has withstood the test of time as his greatest achievement. Rod Taylor stars as George, a turn-of-the-century inventor whose hatred of his violent era inspires him to build a time-travelling device. On

the eve of the 20th Century, he decides to take an optimistic ride over the horizon of humankind's achievement. After pausing for depressing glimpses of WWI, WWII, and nuclear war in 1966, he accelerates to the far-flung future of 802701 AD, where he encounters an Edenic but sheepish society called the Eloi, who are bred for slaughter by a subterranean race of cannibal mutants, the Morlocks.

The film's individual components may be naïve, broadly acted, and old fashioned, but the heart of its storytelling is so palpably sincere, so sweet, direct and uncomplicated, that it achieves a perennial quality that would not have occurred had the script, cast, and technicians been entrusted to the hands of any other filmmaker. For example, in the context of any other film, Alan Young's performance as Filby, George's Scottish friend, would seem painfully exaggerated; in Pal's hands, it communicates a warmth and simplicity that touches the heart in ways that few other performances do. Young's performance, like all of this film's most endearing touches—Sebastian Cabot's comic peek over the edge of the box containing the scale model of the Time Machine, the "Property of H. George Wells" placard on the full-scale model's dashboard, its bittersweet regard for Man's inclination to war, or its farewell question of "Which three books would you have taken?"—is a reflection of the guiding presence of George Pal. **THE TIME MACHINE** is not the greatest science fiction film ever made, but it is perhaps the wisest and most humane of all speculative films.

Since its first video release a decade ago, MGM/UA's various cassettes of this title have borne little resemblance to the glory of the original theatrical prints, being

fuzzy-looking, cropped, and monophonic. This new laserdisc transfer, however, *is* **THE TIME MACHINE** as I remember experiencing it at my local theater. (Though I've seen the film several times on video before now, it took the sound and look of this disc to awaken long-buried memories of my first time. When the male Eloi finds the inspiration to defend Taylor with his fist against a Morlock attack [Side 2, 32:20], I suddenly remembered the cheers his action raised at a "Kiddies' Matinee" 30 years ago!) The restored stereophonic soundtrack (remixed and re-edited by Scott Perry) exhumes Russell Garcia's score from decades of dull monaural sublimation, allowing it to shine all around us once again as the powerful and thrilling work that it is. The cinematography of Paul C. Vogel and art direction of George Davis and William Ferrari are similarly revived, with the disc's increased digital clarity granting an enhanced appreciation of such minutiae as the furnishings in George's home, the marbled stem of the Time Machine's control switch, and the shadowy movements of the green-skinned Morlocks through the recesses of their steaming netherworld abattoirs. The film has been letterboxed at approximately 1.75:1.

Aside from its Old World integrity and bracing futurism, it should also be mentioned that **THE TIME MACHINE** is the ideal New Year's Eve movie—it is to 1900 what Wim Wenders' **UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD** is to the year 2000. Donna and I have already made a date to party the old century out with this very special disc as Guest of Honor. Nineteen chapter breaks are provided, and the disc closes with a theatrical trailer copyrighted in the year 1959.



Rod Taylor battles the Morlocks
in George Pal's exquisite
THE TIME MACHINE.

KARLOFF AND LUGOSI:

The Story of a Haunting Collaboration

By Gregory William Mank
McFarland, 372 pages, \$35.00
(hardcover)

Review by Stanley Wiater



AUTHOR Gregory William Mank, who proved himself a more than capable

cinephile with his 1981 volume, *IT'S ALIVE: THE COMPLETE CINEMA SAGA OF FRANKENSTEIN* (A.S. Barnes), here tackles another intriguing footnote in film history—namely, the eight motion pictures that legendary horror stars Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi collaborated on in the early 1930s and 1940s. Although Mank readily admits that the careers of both actors have already been exhaustively detailed, his focus in *KARLOFF AND LUGOSI: THE STORY OF A HAUNTING COLLABORATION* is to dwell *exclusively* on the production of these eight films, which included such classics as *THE INVISIBLE RAY* (1936), *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939), *BLACK FRIDAY* (1940), and *THE BODY*

THE MUMMY:

Conceived during his mother's extramarital affair with an Egyptian lover, Boris Karloff brought an air of well-bred nobility to his Gothic performances.



SNATCHER (1945). What makes this volume so special is that Mank had access to the production reports and inner office memoranda of most of these films, and discovered on a most intimate level what the studio bosses really thought of their stars. The author also interviewed more than a dozen of the people who had either worked on these productions with Karloff and Lugosi at the time, or had known them personally, gaining even further insights.

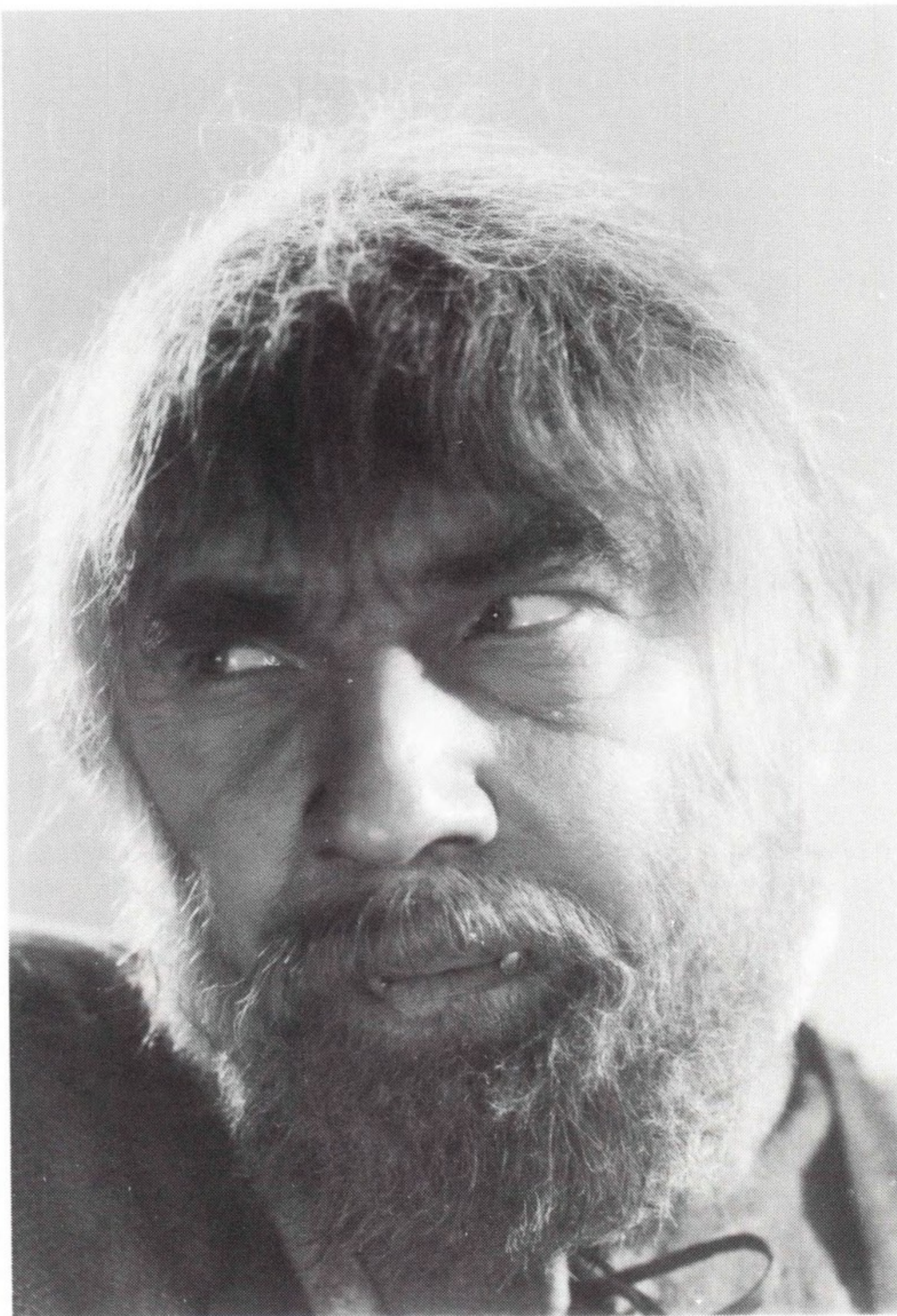
Ultimately, we learn how Karloff and Lugosi were never truly “friends” nor were they ever exactly “rivals.” Although discussions among diehard fans continue to this day as to who was the greater “horror star,” it was widely accepted by their contemporaries that Karloff was a superior character actor who could successfully tackle almost any role, while Lugosi was just as widely dismissed as a former Hungarian *matinée* idol who could do little more than play himself—in aging variations of *Dracula*.

Although Mank does his best to remain fair to both, the bald facts of each actor’s career point out repeatedly how Karloff was always the “winner.” Quite simply, Boris inevitably received better billing—and was always better paid than Bela. Mank makes the point repeatedly of how Lugosi’s refusal of a single role—the unspeaking monster in the 1931 **FRANKENSTEIN** (which made Karloff a star)—was only the first of many missteps he would make in his career. While Karloff made a point of taking on a wide variety of quality roles to sustain his long career, Lugosi would appear in any low-budget

film offered him, no matter what negative effect it might have on his already limited options. Although the author never portrays Boris as a choir boy (it’s still not known for certain how many times he was married), it is known that Bela’s addiction to liquor (and later to pain-killing morphine) clearly added to killing his acting career long before he actually was laid to rest.

Profusely illustrated with rare photographs and poster

reproductions, **KARLOFF AND LUGOSI** is still very narrow in scope for the experienced reader of Karloff and Lugosi tomes. However, for the less jaded fans of both actors, there is more than enough fascinating data and remembrances to stimulate and entertain anyone interested in this crucial aspect of their intertwining careers. Mank’s affection and expertise for his subject matter seeps through every page.



SON OF FRANKENSTEIN:
*Though he wore a signet ring
bearing his family crest,
Bela Lugosi excelled in roles
of European peasantry, such as
the broken-necked Ygor.*

THE LETTERBOX



Donna and I felt a rush of tremendous warmth and excitement while assembling VW #11—our special Vincent Price issue—and we were gratified that so many of our readers (including our parents!) responded to it with similar emotions. There's no denying it: Everybody loves Vincent Price. Several of you wrote in to say exactly that, while others shared personal reminiscences.

We must apologize to one correspondent whose touching letter about Vincent was grievously misplaced. It came from a reader

who actually performed onstage with VP in the 1975 Kenley Players production of DAMN YANKEES, which I described in #11's editorial. He thanked us for reminding him that acting with Vincent Price was one of the great experiences of his life, and mentioned in closing that another member of that road company had been none other than Pia Zadora!

Everyone who loved VW #11 asks us the same question: Did we ever receive a letter of response from Vincent Price himself? Ever gracious, he was one of the first readers we heard from...

VINCENT RESPONDS

I'm thrilled to have Video Watchdog #11, which is, for all intents and purposes, the story of my life! I shall send the generous extra copies to all my enemies just to prove [to them] how famous (and talented) I really am!

Thanks for your good letter and the wonderful copies of VW.

Vincent Price
Los Angeles, CA

Vincent Price jots some thoughts in Samuel Fuller's THE BARON OF ARIZONA (1950).

VINNIE OGRAPHY

Being a Vincent Price fan, I really enjoyed VW #11. To add to your VP Videography:

- **VINCENT PRICE'S ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT SCARY**—originally televised on CBS Saturday, February 16, 1980 as **ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT DREARY**. It appeared on video in 1986 as the second VIDEO READING™ tape from Video Gems. In an effort to get children to read more, Price appeared as Dracula introducing **THE GHOST BELONGED TO ME** by Richard Peck, **THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW** by Washington Irving, and **THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN ITS WALLS** by John Bellairs. After each brief tale, Price urged the viewers to seek out the original books and read the full story. Running time: approx. 50m.

- **CREEPY CLASSICS**—This 1987 video was produced exclusively for Hallmark Cards and was available in Hallmark Stores at Halloween time. Vincent Price was the Master of Scarimonies in this 30m compilation of film clips and trailers.

- **RED SKELTON, THE LOST EPISODES**—VP appears in a 1960 sketch as an actor in need of boxing lessons from Reds' [character] Cauliflower McPugg. The same tape also features a **HONEYMOONERS** parody with Peter Lorre as Ralph Kramden and Vampira as Alice. This one is a Goodtimes Home Video ©1990.

- **RED SKELTON, A COMEDY SCRAPBOOK** features a clip from the boxing sketch mentioned above. A different skit has Red visiting Peter Lorre and Vampira at Lorre's haunted house. This one is ©1991 by Video Treasures.

There is also a tape on the market of Price hosting the world's strangest football plays.

**Tom Fielding
Largo, FL**



Hazel Court and David Del Valle lend Vincent moral support on the set of Jeff Burr's THE OFFSPRING.

VINNIE OGRAPHY 2

Your Vincent Price appreciation piece was wonderful as was David Del Valle's interview. Here's a fewbits of info for the videography and some comments on a facet of Price's career that nobody seems to remember (or care about):

- **THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES**: I currently have a Pay-TV copy of this film and a Beta dub of the Vestron version: both feature the full title.

- **BLOODBATH AT THE HOUSE OF DEATH**: My research suggests that early Ontario copies of this comedy were cut but when the film was later resubmitted [to the CBFC], it was approved uncut, so there are two versions available here and the only way to tell them apart is to watch 'em. I really like the cover illustration of Price!

- **DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE BIKINI MACHINE** was released by Tylon Video, a company that releasd some 60's AIP films and then

apparently went out of business. Tylon's packaging style is similar to that used by HBO which leaves me wondering if it was a short-lived offshoot of that company.

- **THE MONSTER CLUB**: Thrillervideo's cassette of this feature is the same as the edited-for-TV version syndicated by ITC. I'd imagine that the Image disc is probably identical. A lousymovie, but it's fun watching Price and John Carradine together.

- **THE OFFSPRING**: Distributed in Canada by Cineplex-Odeon using IVE's master. A fun little movie, much better than Jeff Burr's next two efforts, **STEPPATHER II** and **LEATHERFACE**.

- **THE RAVEN**: I believe that the Image laserdisc makes use of the Vestron transfer that the latter originally distributed on LD and CED. Is it any better than Warner's?

While we're waiting for someone to release Del Valle's **SINISTER IMAGE: VINCENT PRICE**, Price completists can acquire one conversation with the Master on video...



Vincent Price (with false signature) and the supporting cast of the syndicated Canadian teleseries **THE HILARIOUS HOUSE OF FRIGHTENSTEIN**.

• **FANGORIA'S WEEKEND OF HORRORS: LOS ANGELES 1990** (Available by mail order from Fantaco or at Fangoria conventions for \$19.95) Vincent was the Guest of Honor at this particular function and was interviewed by Joe Dante, who asked questions and read some others supplied by B-movie expert Tom Weaver and members of the audience. An edited version of the conversation appears on this tape. Weaver later transcribed parts of this interview (some of which aren't on the video) for FANGORIA #100. Die hard fans will want to acquire both but should be warned that the quality of this amateurish video is abominable, rarely rising above the level of a fifth generation bootleg.

My first exposure to Vincent Price came, not from his movies, but from a TV series. In 1970, Price journeyed to Canada and appeared on a children's TV show called **THE HILARIOUS HOUSE OF FRIGHTENSTEIN**. A one-hour program, it was produced by CHCH-TV in Hamilton, Ontario on a poverty row budget and shot on videotape. Price played an unnamed host who introduced comedic segments, never interacting with any of the

players. This fact and the generic nature of the material given to him suggests that his footage was probably shot in a few days. In addition to this duty, Vincent also provided the show's opening narration, appearing as a glowing disembodied head superimposed over models of a castle and a desolate terrain. To show the extent that this program affected me as an impressionable youth, I can still remember this narration even though it's been at least a decade since I saw **FRIGHTENSTEIN**:

Another lovely day begins
for ghosts and ghouls with
greenish skin.

So close your eyes and you will find
that you've arrived in Frightenstein.
Perhaps The Count will find a way
to make his monster work today
For if he solves this monster mania
he can return to Transylvania
So welcome were the sun won't shine
to the castle of Count Frightenstein...

(This is then capped off by a wonderful burst of macabre laughter from Price.)

While digging through my belongings, I found a promotional photo for the show (in an envelope

postmarked March 15, 1972!) I've enclosed a photocopy of it. Local comedian Billy Van (also a regular on CHCH's **PARTY GAME** series, shot concurrently) played seven different roles on the show. His main role was that of Count Frightenstein, a vampiric mad doctor who, aided and abetted by his green assistant Igor (Rais Fishka, an ex-grappler who wrestled under the name "Kingfish" and also appears in **CANNIBAL GIRLS**), tries in vain to get his Karloff-styled creature "Brucie" to come to life.

Considering the meager production values, the makeup was excellent and while the humor was aimed primarily at children, there were always a few asides that only parents would understand. Although only 30 or 40 episodes were produced, **FRIGHTENSTEIN** still shows up constantly on local channels, undoubtedly providing cheap Canadian content for station programmers. When the show was syndicated to U.S. stations in the late '70s, it was edited down to 30m and "punched up" with a laugh track.

John Charles
Guelph, Ontario
Canada

GET ON THE GOLDFOOT

I just received the Special "Vincent Price" issue of VIDEO WATCHDOG and wanted to write to say how much I enjoyed it. The study done in the issue—the interview, the bio and the video list—made for a very comprehensive look at the man's career.

I had the delightful pleasure (see—thinking about Mr. Price makes one even try to talk like him...) of seeing the trailer for **DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS** on a big screen last October at the 24-Hour Drexel North Horror Movie Marathon, here in Columbus. I could not stop laughing. This wasn't because the trailer was funny, but because of the stone silence of the crowd watching as the "hilarious" scenes played on the screen!

I was surprised that you mentioned Vincent Price's narrations in Michael Jackson's "Thriller" a few times, yet failed to note his opening narration to "Black Widow" on Alice Cooper's **WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE** album. Price subsequently appeared in the 1975 Canadian made-for-TV special **WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE**. This was a video-adaptation of the entire album, featuring Price as on-screen narrator. The hour-long program was released by Warner Home Video in the early '80s, along with making several appearances on the cable-network USA's **NIGHT FLIGHT** program during its early days in 1983.

While Vincent Price is quite good, and Alice does his best, the hour-long program is not very good. This is mostly due to the watering-down of the album's lyrics to "fit" the storyline into place for the program, and self-censoring to obscure some of the more crazed ideas on the album. A shame, as it could have been a perfect companion to the album itself.

Vincent Price can also be heard doing the opening narration of "Black Widow" during the course of the 1975 theatrical concert film, **WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE** (not to be confused with the above). Although the speech is the same as heard on the album, it is also quite obviously an alternate take. Unfortunately, this film (recently released by Rhino) is not much better than the Canadian television special, as the sound is very compressed and the camera-work is too "close-up" oriented to showcase what everyone wanted to see—the stage show.

It may not be much, but these two films are out on tape and available for viewing, though the Canadian special is certainly the harder of the two to find.

Dale Sherman
Columbus, OH

SKELETON IN HIS CLOSET

Just a short letter to advise you how much I enjoyed your Vincent Price tribute in VW #11. Being terrified at Vincent Price movies are some of my favorite childhood filmgoing memories and have made Vincent Price my favorite (by far) horror actor. I was quite interested in seeing your comment about seeing **THEATRE OF BLOOD** at the RKO Albee, since the Albee was where I saw my first Vincent Price horror film: **HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL**. I can still remember my father taking me there to see this classic horror film, and the kids throwing their popcorn and soda cups as the skeleton was lowered from the balcony. (I also saw Price in **THE HAUNTED PALACE** at the Albee.) My favorite Price horror film has always been **PIT AND THE PENDULUM** and I can remember how frightened I was walking home from the Kinema theater in East New York on a quickly darkening wintry

Saturday afternoon after seeing this terrifying film. (The Vincent Price-Roger Corman-Edgar Allan Poe films have always been my favorite horror films.)

Thanks again for a terrific magazine that helped to bring back some wonderful memories.

Gary Cohen
Brooklyn, NY

DIARY OF A MAD CONSUMER

I purchased the Wood Knapp video of **DIARY OF A MADMAN** a year ago, and it was a gorgeous SP Hi-Fi copy, not SLP as your Vincent Price videography stated. I realize that distributors frequently switch to SLP duplication after a title has been on the market for awhile, dropping the price to make it more "attractive" as a sell-through item. It's a frustrating practice, given the diminished quality and problematic tracking of the slower speed. The latest casualty I've run across is Val Guest's wonderful **DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE** from Thorn EMI. Already crippled by having the scope lensing panned and scanned, it's now only available in the practically unwatchable six hour speed. I cannot understand the rationale of this; if somebody is interested in purchasing a film for their collection, surely they'd be willing to pay the extra couple of bucks in manufacturing costs to have a standard speed version.

Wayne Schmidt
Panorama City, CA

CATCH US IF YOU CAN!

Yours is my favorite movie magazine since the demise of **FOCUS ON FILM**, which also had a compact format and a similar obsession for detail. Don't ever change your format, but I hope you grow successful enough to expand to include *all* types of films—or perhaps launch a sister publication.

In the meantime, some minor quibbling re issue #11. I think you'll find **THE RAPTURE** was an original screenplay by Michael Tolkin, *not* based on his novel. His first and only novel to date was **THE PLAYER**, though his second, **AMONG THE DEAD**, is said to be imminent.

It's probably not worth correcting Vincent Price's remark about James Clavell writing "**SAIGON** and **TAIWAN** and **SHOGUN**," as I don't think he's making a mistake here. There is indeed a **SHOGUN**, but the first two are "parody" Clavell titles Price is making up amusingly off the top of his head in his distinctive devil-may-care manner. (Clavell's other similar-sounding actual title is **TAI-PAN**.) But because you printed all three in the same typeface, some readers may not be alert to the joke.

Now there's quibbling for you!

D. Kraft
Beverly Hills, CA

*We appreciate the compliments and the quibbles. The reference to **THE RAPTURE** being adapted by Tolkin from his own novel was based—if I remember correctly—on information included in a Columbia-Tristar press release announcing the cassette.*

STILL ON TRACK

I have some comments to add to your "The Trouble with **TITAN**" articles. The third part of the article claims [VW 7:19] that many false names in the technical credits, including the director, were cropped offscreen [during their TV broadcasts]. My notes, taken from a 1960's TV broadcast of **PORTRAIT IN TERROR**, list the director and producer as "Michael Rodel" and "Jay Rodel." The AIP pressbook for **BLOOD BATH** lists Bart Patton (**DEMENTIA 13** co-star) as production manager, yet Bart "Paxton" is listed on **TRACK OF THE**

VAMPIRE. In addition to playing "Max" in **BLOOD BATH**, Carl Schanzer was credited as property master of its eventual co-feature, **QUEEN OF BLOOD**.

Dave Marcus
Maplewood, NJ

A SMELL OF OMISSION, A SWALLOW OF CROW

Many thanks for the nice review of **A SMELL OF HONEY, A SWALLOW OF BRINE** in VW #11. While you correctly credited Laszlo Kovacs as the cinematographer in your critique, you neglected to mention another man in the company who went on from exploitation movies to bigger and better things. The actor in the dungeon dream sequence, billed as Neville Coward, was the late Sam Melville who, a year or so after appearing in **SMELL OF HONEY**, became one of the three lead characters in the TV series, **THE ROOKIES**.

David F. Friedman
Anniston, AL

We also neglected to mention that Dave Friedman himself appeared in the film as the jury foreman who declares Stacey Walker's first boyfriend guilty of rape. Unless I'm mistaken, Dave also walks off into the moonlight with Stacey in the film's closing shot!

VAMPIRE COUNTS

In his "Video Around the World" report on the French release of **HORROR OF DRACULA** [VW 6:15-16], Lucas Balbo states that it is the most complete version currently available, including previously unseen footage of the gory stakings and Dracula's full decomposition. This is not so.

The French version—**Les Cauchemars de Dracula**—is only 4s longer than the print recently shown on BBC television, the extra footage being the staking

of Lucy. There is no extra footage in the decay sequence. In other words, it is exactly the same as the Warner Home Video VHS release in America, apart from the obvious difference in overall running time due to projected speed variations.

Marc Morris
London, England

Just as **ANDY WARHOL'S DRACULA** can't drink "impure" blood, so too should admirers of Count Udo Kier's exploits be warned that the film's recent release by Triboro Entertainment Group is tainted by cutting. Leonard Maltin's **MOVIE AND VIDEO GUIDE** 1992 says on its original release Paul Morrissey's film clocked in at 106m; subsequent prints, including Triboro's, run 94m.

Though the film's copious nudity and bloodletting seem to have survived evisceration, the trimming makes a hash of what the packaging calls "a bizarre and wickedly comic plot" as the Count and the nobleman, "gustily (?) portrayed" by Vittorio De Sica, are "consumed by a passion for what they mistakenly perceive as each other's 'riches.'" The father of neorealism's appearances are few and little that's "bizarre and wickedly comic" transpires between the two characters, at least in this edit.

Worse, the packaging trumpets a "special appearance" by Roman Polanski. But unless he's playing Andy Warhol's Invisible Man, or has been panned-and-scanned into oblivion, Polanski's cameo is nowhere to be seen in Triboro's video release.

Bob Cashill
San Jose, CA

All the more reason to stick with the letterboxed Japanese import "wursion."



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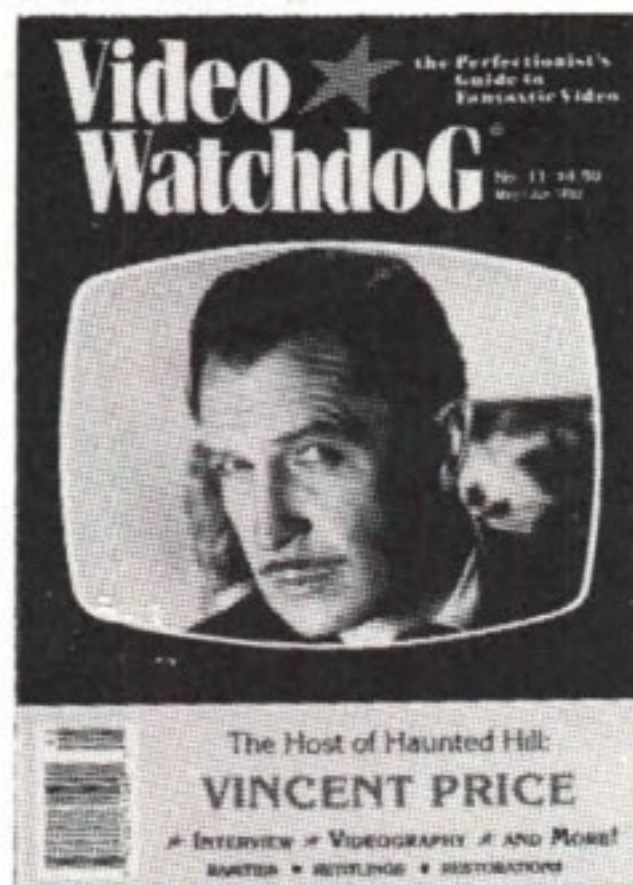
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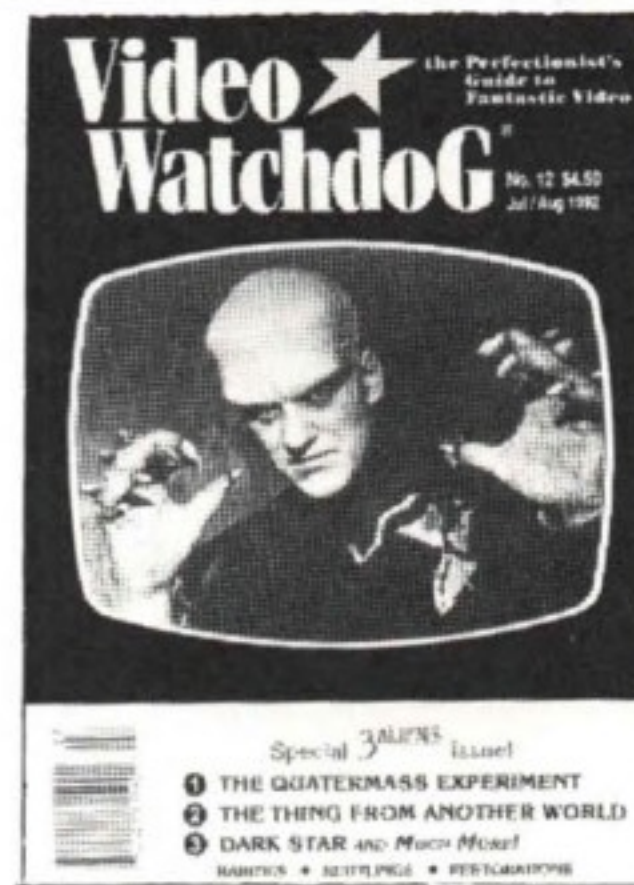
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Childhood Productions,
The Russian Fairy Tales of
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SINBAD, Terence Fisher.



No. 10, Mar/Apr 1992
TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT
DAY, ALIENS, MR. ARKADIN
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